ROBERT HARLAND

MOTHER AND CHILD: A world's first in mating and hatching in captivity of the endangered eagle owl in Negros Occidental. The baby named Bubo is at right. *(Story on Page A18.)*

■ ACROSS / A18

Rare RP eagle owl breeds in captivity for first time

■ BUSINESS / B1

GMA 7 likely to cut initial public offering size to 20%

■ METRO / A24

4 suspected Tadtad gang members killed in gunfight with police in Fairview

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph
Thursday, December 15, 2005 ★★ 9 sections / Vol. 21 / No. 7 P18
website: www.inq7.net

SEA Games over, now who'll foot P23-M bill?

By Carla Gomez and Connie Fernandez
PDI Visayas Bureau

BACOLOD CITY—AFTER the successful holding of the Southeast Asian Games in the country,

SEA GAMES/ A22

Palace sees sinister forces

This is not the work of Abat alone, says justice secretary

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE BRICKBATS ARE FLYING FAST AND FURIOUS, BUT MALAcañang officials are not laughing at former Defense Secretary Fortunato Abat's declaration of himself as president of a "transition government."

At a briefing in Malacañang, Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez said: "I take this seriously because I am convinced personally that this is not the work of Mr. Abat alone. There are some shadowy figures or sinister forces behind it. That is why we are monitoring them, to find out what they are up to."

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said authorities had started studying Abat's supposed financial benefactors to determine the extent of the conspiracy.

Abat's actions have gained significance in the light of the death anniversary of Fernando Poe Jr. and the furlough given to ex-President Joseph Estrada to attend his brother's wake today.

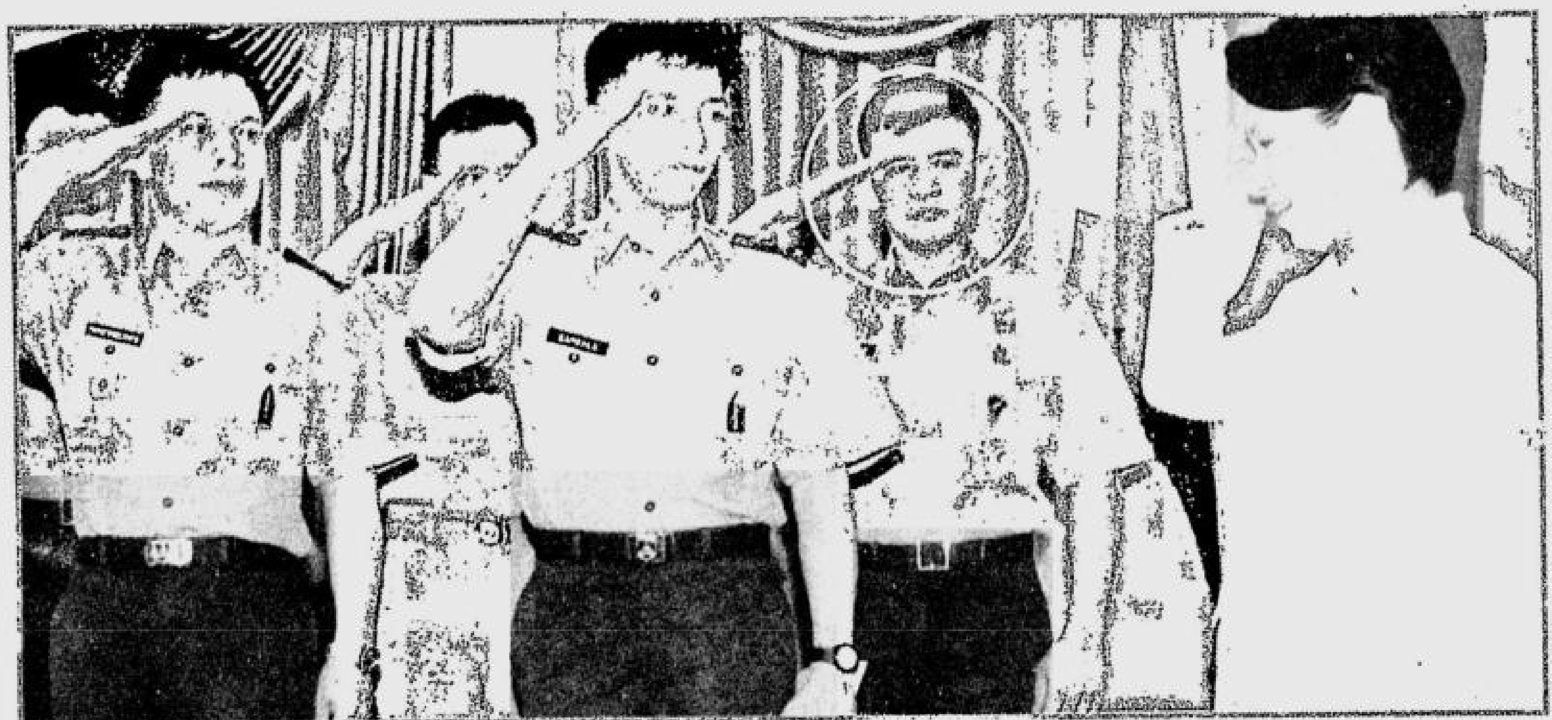
"These are a confluence of events that must be taken into consideration as a collective situation and not isolated to what the Abat group is doing," Gonzalez said.

But Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye, President Macapagal-Arroyo's spokesperson, dismissed Abat's actions as something that the Palace and the people did not have to be "concerned, worried or excited about."

"Maybe [it's] something to be amused about," Bunye told reporters at the Mandarin Oriental hotel in Kuala Lumpur, a few hours

PALACE/ A21

DEAD SERIOUS, Abat says of his transition government at his "seat of government" in Club Filipino. "I am a military man, I make things happen."



HAIL TO THE CHIEF from five officers of Oakwood vintage who apologized to President Arroyo last year. But that was then. Today, Marine Capt. Nicanor Faeldon (encircled) has flown the coop and withdrawn support from the Commander in Chief. To his right, Capt. Gary Alejano and Lt. Antonio Trillanes, also in detention have hung tough while (front row, from left) Capt. Gerardo Gambala and Capt. Milo Maestrocampo had recently distanced themselves from their fellow mutineers.

PDI PHOTO

Oakwood mutineer escapes, hits GMA

By Tarra V. Quismundo and Dona Z. Pazzibugan

THE JUDGE WAS ON LEAVE AND court proceedings against junior military officers who staged a failed coup attempt more than two years ago was reset for another day.

But when the so-called Oakwood mutineers were about to be escorted back to barracks, the head count was one man short.

Marine Capt. Nicanor Faeldon, one of 31 junior officers who face trial for leading 300 soldiers on July 27, 2003 in taking over the plush Oakwood Premier apartment-hotels, staged a disappearing act at the old Gusali ng Katarungan (Justice Hall) on F. Zobel Street, Barangay Poblacion, in Makati City yesterday morning.

OAKWOOD/ A10

ABAT'S VOW

'We will not leave until GMA's gone'

By Fe Zamora and Luige A. del Puerto

RETIRED GENERAL FORTUNATO Abat yesterday vowed to continue as "president" of his "revolutionary transition government" until President Macapagal-Arroyo steps down.

Before the December sun could fully warm the morning, the fiery Abat was holding his first press conference after announcing the formation of the "revolutionary transition government" during a press conference at midnight on Tuesday at the Waling-Waling Room of the Club Filipino in Greenhills, San Juan.

But Salvador Enriquez, an associate of Abat's, said the new structure was aimed at providing a "bridge" from the Arroyo administration to a new leadership. "The objective of this government is to correct the wrongs that were done to our people, including Erap," Enriquez said in reference to former President Joseph Estrada, who was deposed in January 2001 and has remained confined while being tried for plunder.

Enriquez and Abat served as budget and defense secretaries, respectively, during the administration of President Fidel Ramos.

Abat, 80, also announced the appointment of the first three officers of the 15-member council that would supposedly replace the Arroyo Cabinet. He said Enriquez, former Ambassador Roy Señeres, and former San Miguel Corp. director Emmanuel Cruz would head the public service, security and justice, and political sectors, respectively.

The nominees to the other positions in the council are being screened, he said.

Abat spelled out what he hoped to achieve in the next few days—to put "psychological pres-

WE WILL/ A21

Garcillano owns up to voice on tape but ...

By Michael Lim Ubac

"YES, IT'S ME BUT ...."

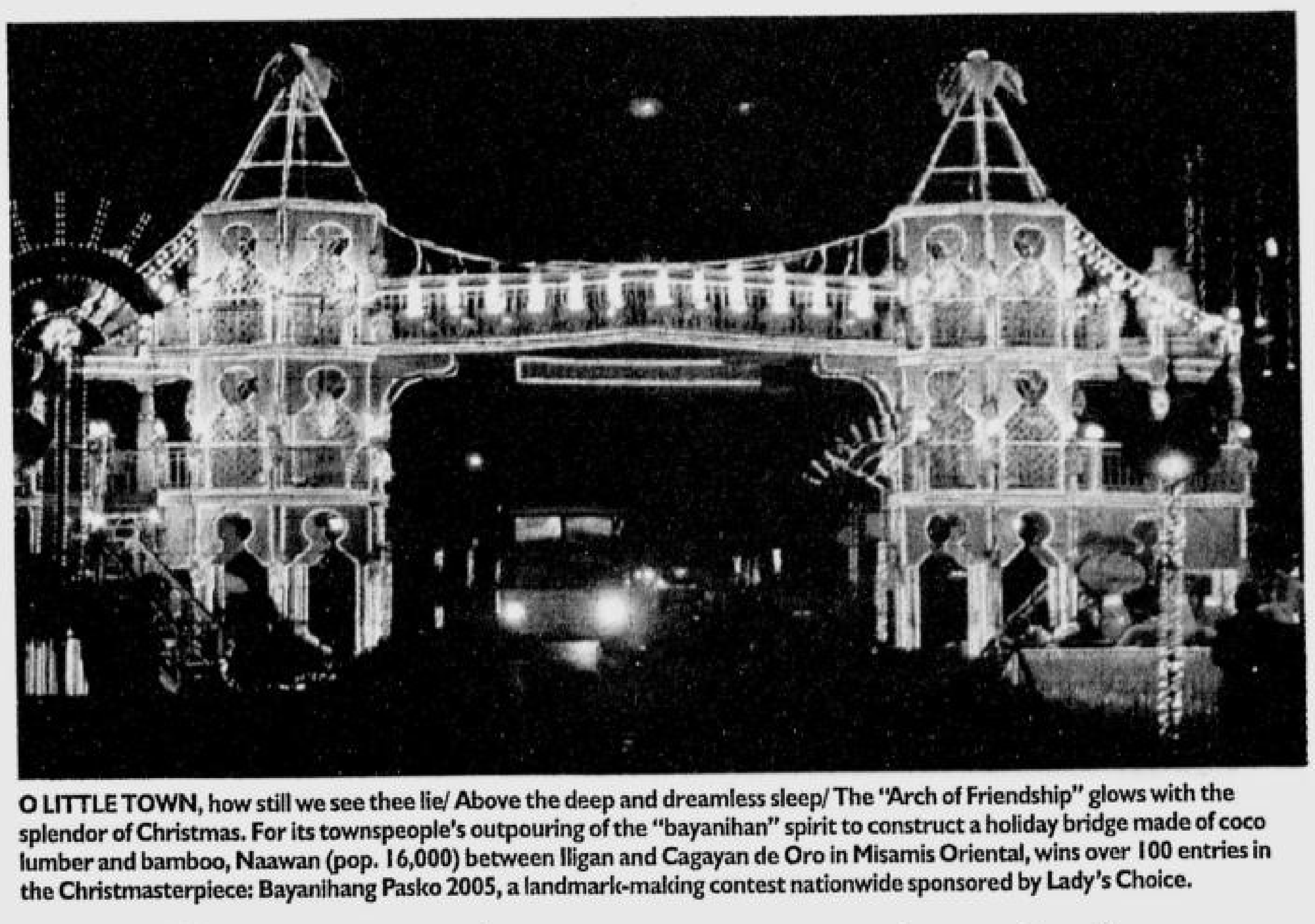
Virgilio Garcillano yesterday stopped short of confirming it was his voice caught in a wiretapped phone conversation purportedly with President Macapagal-Arroyo 14 days after the May 10, 2004, presidential election. But he, as usual, denied opposition claims it was evidence of vote-rigging.

The former election commissioner also left it to Ms Arroyo to say if it was her on the other end of the bugged line. "The President herself should admit that," said Garcillano in an exclusive interview with the INQUIRER at Camp Bagong Diwa in Taguig.

He answered in the affirmative when asked by this reporter if he recognized his voice in the "Hello Garci" audio tapes.

"It sounds like my voice," Garcillano said but was quick to point out that "whatever similarities it may have had to my voice have obviously been manufactured or illegally and maliciously lifted from other

GARCILLANO/ A22



O LITTLE TOWN, how still we see thee lie/ Above the deep and dreamless sleep/ The "Arch of Friendship" glows with the splendor of Christmas. For its townspeople's outpouring of the "bayanihan" spirit to construct a holiday bridge made of coco lumber and bamboo, Naawan (pop. 16,000) between Iligan and Cagayan de Oro in Misamis Oriental, wins over 100 entries in the Christmasterpiece: Bayanihang Pasko 2005, a landmark-making contest nationwide sponsored by Lady's Choice.

Small town 'Christmasterpiece' champ

By DJ Yap

A SMALL RURAL TOWN IN MISAMIS Oriental can teach big, rich cities a thing or two about how to depict the true splendor of Christmas.

For the people of Naawan, it takes just a little creativity, a bit of talent, plenty of resourcefulness, and an outpouring of the "*bayanihan*" spirit now rarely found in urban centers.

Naawan, a fifth-class municipality (annual income: P7 million-P13 million) with a population of 16,000, beat

SMALL/ A4

'Forever in our hearts,' say FPJ family, supporters

By Margaux C. Ortiz and DJ Yap

THE AMOUNT OF TIME ONE MOVES ON from grief cannot be measured, Susan Roces said.

But the identical shirts she and her family wore yesterday said it all. With her husband's image in front, the shirts had the message: "Forever in Our Hearts."

Posters, yellow chrysanthemums and pirated VCDs adorned "Da King's" tomb as the late actor's family and supporters commemorated his first death anniversary at the Manila North Cemetery yesterday.

FOREVER/ A10

No 'Eraption': Historian likens Erap to Bonifacio

By Norman Bordadora

A DISTINGUISHED HISTORIAN WHO HAS published nationalist tomes on the country's history sees former President Joseph Estrada as a contemporary Andres Bonifacio.

Estrada is a man who fell from power because the elite won't have anything to do with a leader who represents the masses, according to Dr. Zeus Salazar, former chair of the De-

NO 'ERAPTION'/ A21

Second FRONTPAGE

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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Eastern and Southern Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao will have cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and isolated thunderstorms. Widespread rains over Bicol Region and Eastern Visayas may trigger flashfloods and landslides. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to cloudy with rainshowers.

COMPILED BY CYRIL L BONABENTE, PDI RESEARCH/12/15/05 SOURCE PAGASA

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

RP takes hardline in WTO talks

OUTNUMBERED by an army of photographers, a lone Filipino activist takes on a phalanx of anti-riot policemen in the anti-World Trade Organization protest in Hong Kong.

EDWIN BACASMAS

By Blanche S. Rivera

HONG KONG—THE PHILIPPINES is taking a hard-line stance on negotiations on trade and services at the World Trade Organization meeting here, bucking a proposal from developed countries to regulate labor migration which would effectively constrain the country's $8-billion overseas workers sector.

According to Ellen Sana, executive director of the Center for Migrants Advocacy, the group of developed countries at the WTO wants to control the movement of "service providers," that is, the workers that are allowed to enter their countries.

She said the Philippines has refused to tackle the terms of this so-called Mode 4 proposal even in past WTO meetings because of the proposal's adverse impact on its position as a labor-exporting country.

"The Philippines has been deploying [workers] for decades. Our labor-sending policy is older than this WTO Mode 4, and suddenly they (developed countries) want to dictate the flow of labor according to the services they need. That's not right," Sana said in an interview during a protest march near the Wan Chai Convention Center.

Ministers from WTO countries are meeting in Hong Kong until Dec. 18 to finalize certain "consensus points" on the ongoing talks on agriculture, industry, services, intellectual property rights and other trade-related concerns at the WTO's Doha Development Round.

There are four modes of supplying services under the WTO's General Agreement on Trade and Services (GATS). Mode 4 refers to the movement of "natural persons" to cover all individuals temporarily moving from one WTO member country to another because of work.

Sana said the United States, European Union and Japan have been pushing for the adoption of the Mode 4 framework so it can control the kind of workers that enter their borders.

"They want only the highly skilled work force like lawyers, accountants... those who will provide the services that they need. They're not even talking about the rights of the workers, just the services they provide. It's really a commodity," Sana said.

The Philippines has about eight million overseas Filipino workers deployed all over the world, most of them unskilled. These OFWs send around $8 billion in remittances to the Philippines annually, providing a huge boost to the economy.

Philippine migrant organizations and other members of the Stop the New Round Coalition, an international network of non-government organizations pushing for the derailment of the WTO talks, staged an anti-GATS protest yesterday.

About 500 mostly Filipino and Korean protesters were dispersed by police as they tried to charge the convention center. Four Filipino militants – Glen Ymata, Wilson Fortaleza, Rasti Delizo and – were stopped by police with pepper spray.

Immigration chief vows to deliver Bolante to Senate

By Leila B. Salaverria

THE ARREST WARRANT ISSUED AGAINST former Department of Agriculture Undersecretary Jocelyn Bolante is enough for Immigration agents to pounce on him and deliver him directly into the clutches of the Senate as soon as he returns to the country, Immigration chief Alipio Fernandez Jr. said yesterday.

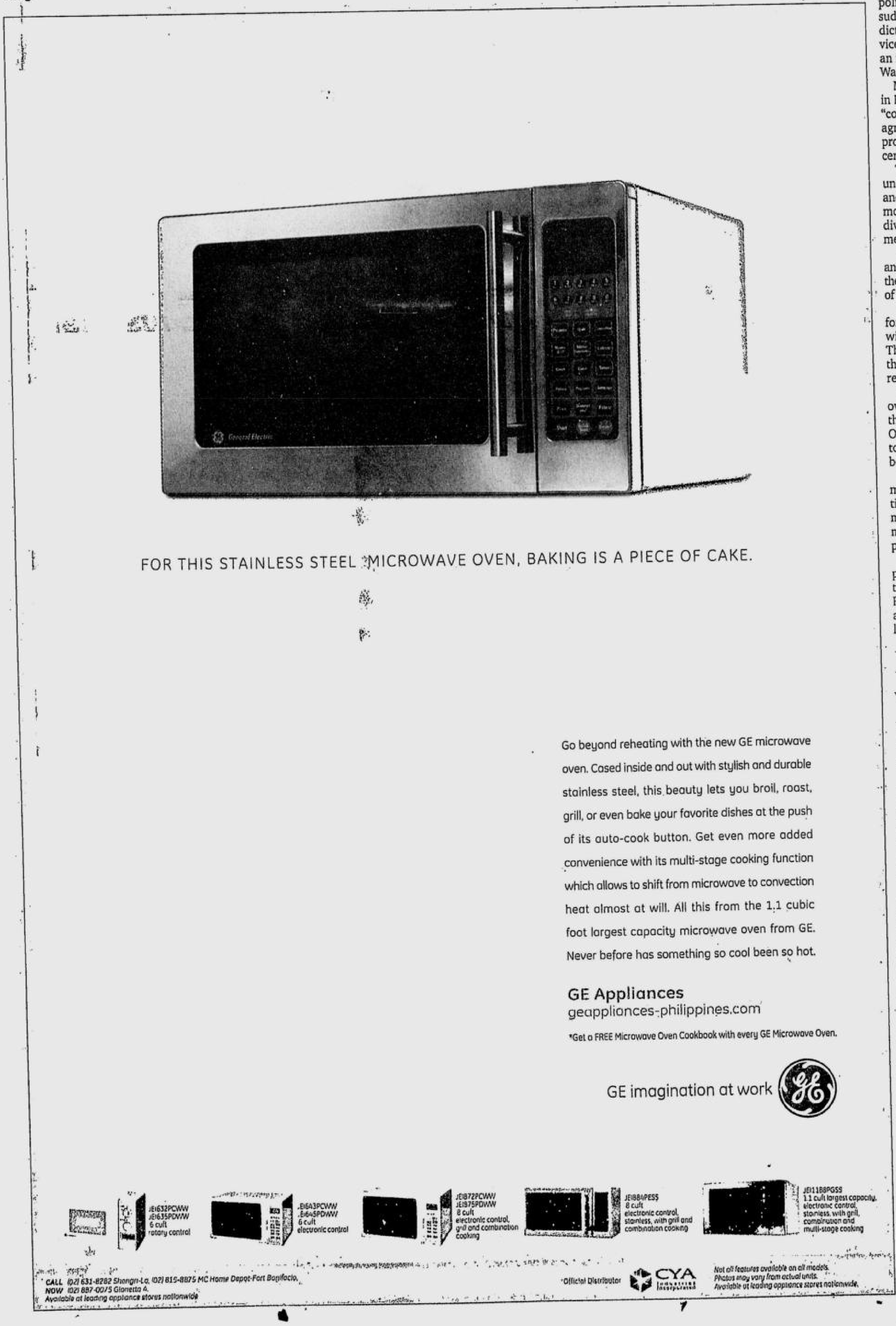
Fernandez told the INQUIRER that the Bureau of Immigration has received a copy of the arrest warrant issued by the Senate and he was putting out a new order moving Bolante's name up on the Immigration watch list of people with arrest warrants pending against them.

"Because of the warrant against him, he will be held by Immigration and then referred immediately to the sergeant at arms of the Senate upon his return," Fernandez said.

The Senate ordered Bolante's arrest last Tuesday after declaring him in contempt for repeatedly ignoring summonses for him to appear at its hearings into the allegedly anomalous disbursement of the P728 million fertilizer fund. The money, distributed to over 100 members of the House of Representatives, was allegedly used for President Macapagal-Arroyo's 2004 election campaign.

Bolante flew to Hong Kong en route to the United States last Sunday, on the eve of yet another Senate hearing. His name was already on the Immigration watch list, but according to Fernandez it was for purposes of monitoring only since no arrest warrant or hold order had yet been issued against Bolante.

The bureau was required only to inform the Senate of Bolante's flight and destination, Fernandez added. *With a report from Juliet Labog-Javellana*



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Mike D's marketing venture raises eyebrows

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

DEFENSOR: 'I'm helping our *kababayan*'

ENVIRONMENT SECRETARY Michael Defensor has taken to heart President Macapagal-Arroyo's standing order to create business opportunities for the Filipino.

But his being a Cabinet secretary has raised questions of propriety.

To friends and colleagues in and out of Malacañang and Congress, Defensor is aggressively pitching his family's new multilevel marketing (MLM) company, JC Spicecorp Inc., which sells through its members a variety of goods – from shoes to watches, hotdogs to *tocino*(sweet meats), and even cars to real estate.

A lawyer in the Ombudsman's office, who requested anonymity, said government officials, especially ranking ones, were discouraged from promoting their commercial interests while in office because it was improper and left a bad taste in the mouth.

But in an interview, Defensor said he did not see any conflict between his day job and his being a proponent of JC Spice (Years ago, Defensor was a member of the "Spice Boys" in Congress composed mostly of young legislators).

Good business opportunity

"I'm helping our *kababayan* (countrymen) by selling them a good business opportunity," he said.

For P7,000 (roughly one month's minimum wage), Defensor said members get a "business package" of goods (containing items like bags, cologne, T-shirts, etc.) and the privilege of selling the products in JC Spice's catalog which is as thick as a telephone directory.

Members can get the items at discounts of between 10 and 70 percent and they don't have to comply with restrictive capital and documentary requirements and the minimum purchases imposed by manufacturers.

"Our prices are even better than Shoemart's," Defensor said, adding that he envisions JC Spice selling everything a person needs from the time he wakes up to the time he goes to bed.

"While our competitors have either shoes or cosmetic products, we have products that you never thought could be sold through MLM, such as cars and real estate."

His sister, former Quezon City Rep. Ma. Theresa "Maite" Defensor, is a director of the company and she said JC Spice is a good alternative to microfinancing.

"A fish ball vendor can lose his money and stop selling fish balls. As a JC Spice member, he can still buy our goods and sell them at a profit by asking potential clients, mostly friends and relatives, to make a 50 percent down payment," Maite said.

MLM a pyramiding scheme

Aside from the profit for selling the products, members get 2 percent from the monthly sales of other members they recruited (up to a maximum of 5). This, however, is the part of the MLM program that regulators such as the Department of Trade and Industry frown on.

Former Trade Undersecretary Adrian S. Cristobal Jr. explained that while the MLM or networking program was legal, it becomes a pyramiding scheme when "income is generated primarily from recruiting others into the company instead of selling products."

Curiously, JC Spice used to be JC Martin Corp. until it was taken over by Defensor and his relatives last May. JC Martin was one of nearly two dozen MLM firms investigated by the DTI for pyramiding. But Defensor said JC Spice had fully complied with the guidelines of the DTI and it had resolved all the issues faced by JC Martin.

Firm cleared

"We came out as one of those that was cleared and we're the only firm that did not change its business plan," Defensor said.

The government crackdown on MLM firms beginning in 2003 was the reason Defensor distanced himself from First Quadrant Corp., then the country's biggest MLM firm that was owned by the family of his wife, Julie Rose Tactacan Defensor, who refused to comment on the acrimonious split.

Image model

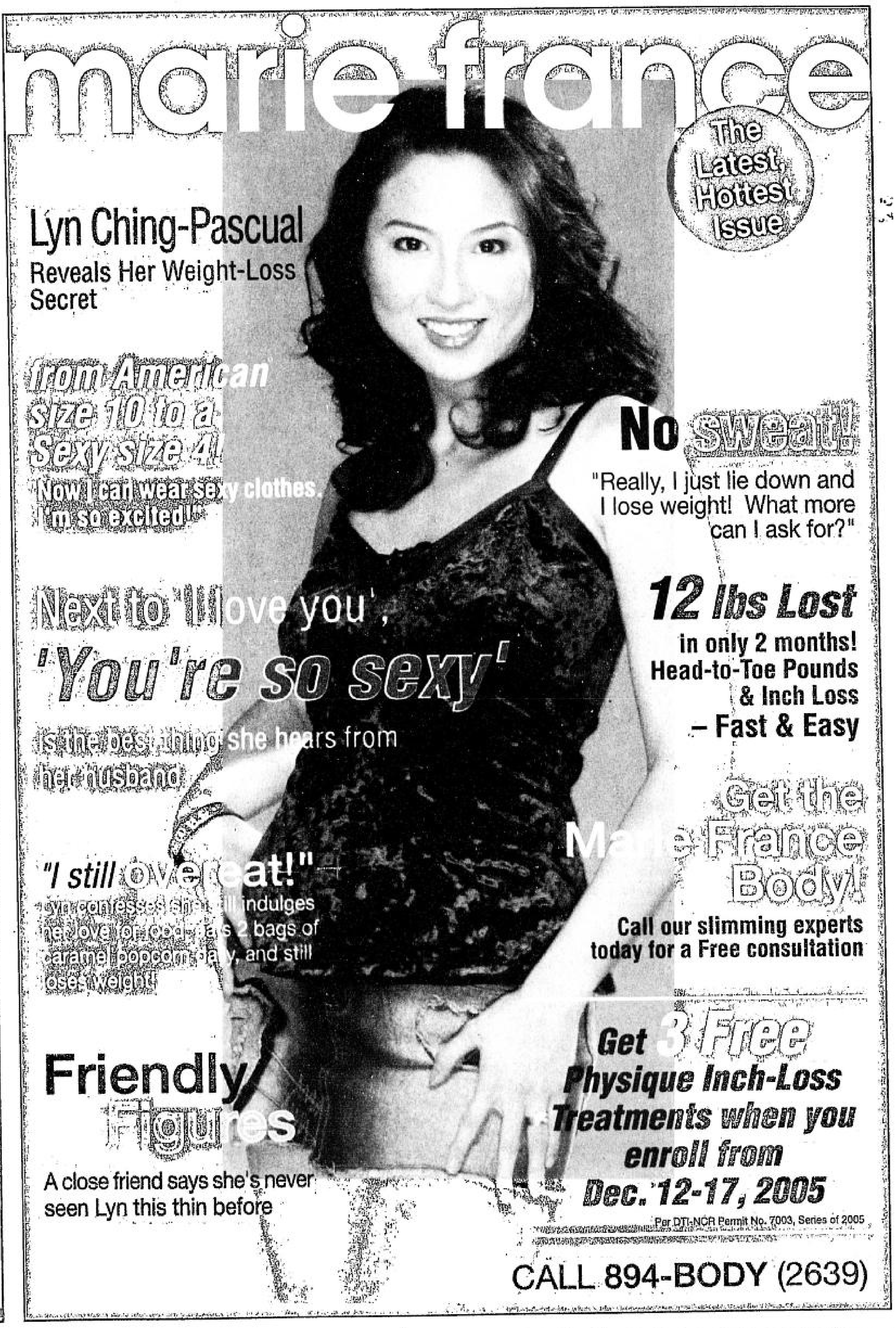
Although the environment secretary is not listed among the six directors of JC Spice, he has posed as its image model on billboards and company handouts and he volunteered to talk about the project himself.

Defensor said he was serious about running JC Spice just like similar operations in the United States. He said the company has plans to list its shares on the Philippine Stock Exchange with an initial public offering possibly next year.

"We're planning to use the money to expand not only in the Philippines but also overseas, especially where there are big Filipino communities," Defensor said.

JC Spice currently has 50 franchises nationwide which take orders and handle the warehousing requirements of the company.

Since Defensor's group took over, the company's roster has grown to over 100,000 with at least 15,000 active members. With nearly 3 million of 33 million Filipino workers jobless, Defensor said he was giving Filipinos an opportunity to make money.



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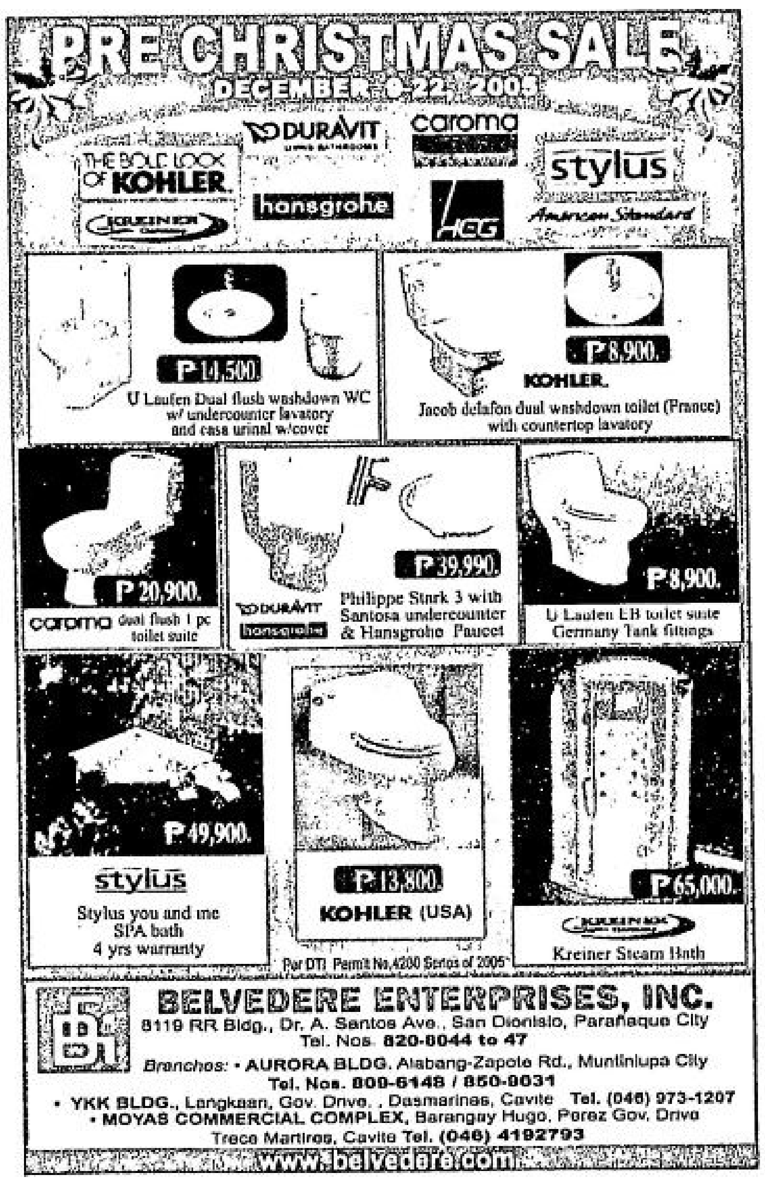

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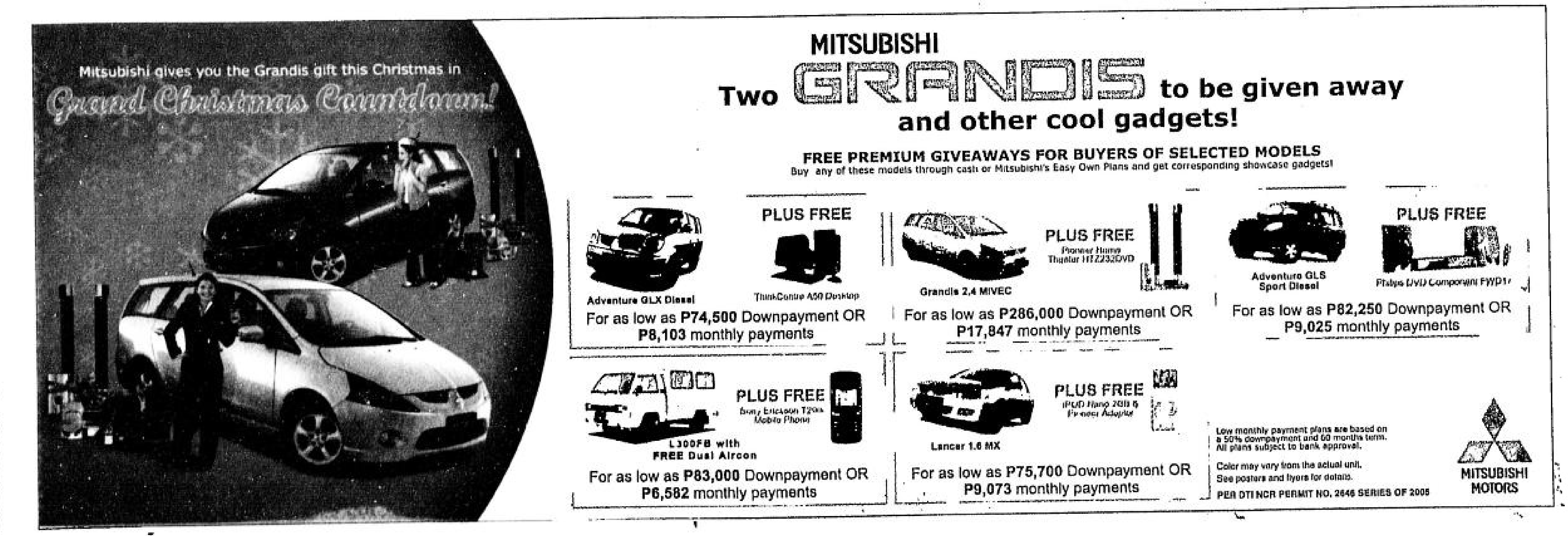

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OUTSTANDING FILIPINO RETAILER OF THE YEAR

THE LITTLE TOWN THAT ROARED: Dennis Roa is the triumphant mayor of Naawan, the rural town in Misamis Oriental that won the grand prize during the awarding rites of the Christmasmasterpiece finals at the UP Theater on Wednesday.

ROGER CARPIO

Small town 'Christmasterpiece' champ

From page A1

more than a hundred other entries to emerge as the grand winner of "Christmasterpiece: Bayanihang Pasko 2005," a Yuletide landmark-making contest for cities and towns nationwide.

In true underdog triumph, the 8,000-ha town defeated the country's richest and biggest cities, such as Quezon City and Makati in Metro Manila, as well as traditional Christmas tourist spots, like Tangub City in Misamis Occidental.

Naawan's "Arch of Friendship," a glittery arched structure made of bamboo and coconut lumber stretching across a national highway, won a P1-million endowment fund for a "Creativity Center," and an additional P200,000 in cash prizes.

Organized by the Lady's Choice brand of Unilever Philippines, the competition sought to be "a unifying event centering on the Filipino Christmas tradition and the *bayanihan* spirit."

Silver Awards

Eleven other entries from Abra to Davao won Silver Awards and P25,000 each in cash.

Being small and rural gave Naawan an advantage over the other competitors when it came to preserving the unique Filipino tradition of *bayanihan* wherein townsfolk work together for a certain goal, according to organizers.

Not a single entry from Metro Manila made it to the final 25, even though Quezon City and Makati, two of the wealthiest local government units, joined the contest.

"Probably, it's a sign that there's very little *bayanihan* now in Metro Manila. But in barangays, we saw how townsfolk really worked together. It was really *bayanihan*," said Andrea Echavez, an event organizer.

The judges were National Artist for Literature Alejandro Roces; sculptor Ramon Orlina; Ma. Cristina Toralba, an urban and regional planner and expert in heritage architecture, and Alex Dan Tacderas, a marketing executive for Lady's Choice.

Bridging relationships

Naawan's entry, a deviation from usual Christmas landmarks, such as giant trees, "*belen*" or Nativity scenes, and "parol," representing the star of Christmas, extends across the 10-meter Iligan-Cagayan de Oro National Highway.

The arch symbolizes "connectivity" and "bridging relationships" among the town's 10 barangays, according to its mayor, Dennis Roa.

At the awarding ceremonies on Tuesday night at the University of the Philippines Theater, an elated Roa said the landmark was the fruit of close cooperation and coordination among town officials, schools, nongovernmental organizations and religious groups.

Naawan, an agricultural town between Iligan and Cagayan de Oro cities, spent only P50,000 on the structure. The bulk of the funds came from private donations and contributions, the mayor said.

The local government provided the lights, but most of the materials were recycled and contributed by schools and organizations, he added.

200 volunteers

At least 200 volunteers worked on the project for more than a month, he said.

The town's entry has five main features—belfry, bridge, lamps, kabisig (a human replica) and balcony.

"The belfry, or the bell tower, is a Hispanic structural influence that symbolizes Christianity, as brought by the Spaniards. It is an apt reminder of the Creator's presence as the Way, the Truth and the Life," according to the local interpretation of the structure.

"And to follow Him, we must climb the ladder and path of a Christian life of love and service to humanity, offering nothing but our very life," it continued.

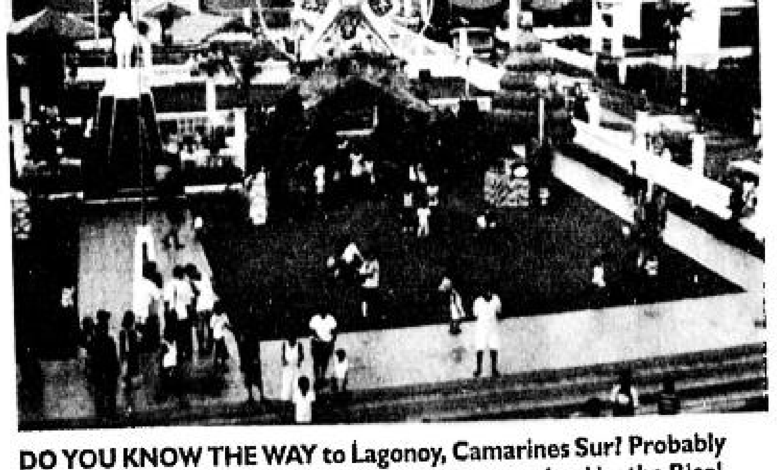
Roa said he would use the P1-million grant to build a creativity center for out-of-school youth.

First of its kind

The competition was the first of its kind in the country, according to organizers.

In past seasons, Unilever simply gave away cars, houses and other prizes.

This time, "we wanted to do something relevant to the times," said Rudi Ramin, assistant brand manager.



DO YOU KNOW THE WAY to Lagonoy, Camarines Sur? Probably not. But even there in that remote, rural town edged by the Bicol mountain ranges, a giant lantern dominates the town plaza, lovingly handcrafted by the townspeople.

Peso regains momentum

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PESO REGAINED MOMENTUM against the United States dollar yesterday along with other Asian currencies after the US Federal Reserve raised interest rates but hinted that its rate-increase and credit-tightening campaign may be at an end.

The peso rose by 24.5 centavos against the US dollar to close at 53.45 yesterday, against Tuesday's finish of 53.695.

The US Fed, the US central bank, yesterday raised its target federal funds rate by another 25 basis points for the 13th consecutive time to 4.25 percent, its highest level since May 2001.

But it also signaled that its series of rate increases may be at an end, soothing concerns about rising borrowing costs for companies and consumers.

The US Fed dropped the reference to monetary policy "accommodation" in its accompanying outlook statement, raising expectations that it would soon end its series of interest-rate increases.

"The Fed action was expected. Its immediate implication for the Philippines is on interest rate differentials and the possible downward effect on the domestic currency," said Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas governor Amando Tetangco Jr.

A narrowing interest rate differential usually exerts pressure on the peso to depreciate against the US dollar as it makes assets denominated in the local currency less attractive but the announcement that the US Fed would soon be done with interest rate hikes bolstered the peso yesterday.

"This does not seem to present a source of inflationary impulses at this time," Tetangco said.

He said the policy-making Monetary Board would be meeting today for its monthly policy rate-setting and would make a full assessment to include the inflation outlook, liquidity growth, external sector developments and other relevant factors.

Many currency and money market dealers believe the BSP may well decide to keep its own interest rates steady at today's meeting.

"There is not much pressure on the BSP to hike its rates," said Roland Avante, treasurer of Chinatrust Commercial Bank Phil.

Avante said the peso rebounded against the US dollar after the downward correction in the past few days because of the US Fed's latest comment on its monetary stance.

He said the peso, which is now trading at its strongest in more than two years, would likely remain resilient against the US dollar for the rest of the year because of strong inflows from overseas Filipino workers.

Yesterday, the peso opened at an intra-day low of 53.74 but gained throughout the day to hit a high of 53.44 before closing at 53.45 against the US dollar. Volume at the Philippine Dealing System stood at $344 million.

GMA returns to host visiting Korean leader

By Christine O. Avendaño
and Nikko Dizon

PRESIDENT GLORIA MACAPAGAL-Arroyo and South Korean President Roh Moo-Hyun arrived late yesterday afternoon from Kuala Lumpur where they attended the 11th summit of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and an expanded meeting of Asean leaders and their counterparts from six trading partners in the region.

Roh and his wife, who arrived at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport aboard a chartered Asiana Airlines flight an hour ahead of Ms Arroyo, are on a two-day state visit to the Philippines. They were met by Vice President Noli de Castro and South Korean Ambassador to the Philippines Hong Jung Gi.

The Korean Times website reported that Roh's Manila visit was part of his "summit diplomacy" that would focus on economic cooperation in the region and broaden South Korea's ties with Malaysia and the Philippines.

The South Korean President will be in Manila until noon tomorrow.

The first-ever East Asian Summit (EAS) brought together the leaders of the 10-member Asean plus China, South Korea, Japan, New Zealand, Australia and India.

Not much had been expected by diplomatic observers from the meeting, given the exclusion of the United States and disparate interests of the participating countries.

Nonetheless, Ms Arroyo thought it was a milestone.

"I see value in the holding of the EAS annually, at least in the formative stages of the EAS, to allow us to maximize the momentum generated by the first meeting," Ms Arroyo told the Kuala Lumpur gathering yesterday.

Saying Manila looked forward to continue this "very useful exercise," the President invited the leaders to come to the Philippines next year for the second EAS, which will coincide with the 12th Asean summit which the Philippines is hosting in December next year in Cebu.

The President said there had been much speculation "on what the EAS should be and what it would accomplish."

"Yet we cannot overlook the fact that the 16 people sitting around the table collectively account for 30 percent of world trade, some 22 percent of global GDP and about one half of the world's population," President Arroyo said.

The President said there was "real potential to pull our political will together and address issues of strategic importance to the East Asian region."

She then made a pitch for energy security for the region, a proposal that she had been pushing for repeatedly at the Asean summit here. She asked them to agree to collectively develop alternative and indigenous energy sources that are available in East Asia and to do it on a large scale.

Meanwhile, Russian President Vladimir Putin told Ms Arroyo he wanted to visit the Philippines and was looking forward to the next EAS. The two leaders had a meeting on the sidelines of the Asean summit.

Ms Arroyo said she told Putin that the Philippines would sponsor the entry of Russia into the EAS and that she had obtained "firm commitments" from other EAS countries on the matter.

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PROFILE OF A (SUSPECTED) CABLE THIEF

'I need to get out of jail soon'

(This is a sidebar on the three-part series on the rampant phone cable theft in the country that appeared on Page 1 on Dec. 12-14. More than a hundred kilometers of phone cables across the country have been lost to thieves over the past two years, downing more than 300,000 lines and causing the telecom industry to spend at least P200 million just to restore the pilfered lines. A combination of record copper prices, hard times and drugs is driving the frenzy of cable theft. Telephone companies have come up with schemes, including cash reward, to curb the theft, but the problem persists. Most of the perpetrators are minors.)

By Jocelyn R. Uy

TWO WEEKS SHY OF HIS 20TH birthday, Mario (not his real name) was arrested by barangay police in August for allegedly pilfering PLDT phone cables at Soldiers' Hills Subdivision in Muntinlupa City.

Before dawn, Mario and Carlos, 14, were seen burning some 30 kilos of cable during a downpour.

"The wires are not completely burned. They just melt the wire's rubber coating, then the copper would be sold somewhere," SPO3 Ed Orongan said.

Orongan said Mario's group had already stolen at least 300 kilos of PLDT cables. The group had even reached San Pedro, Laguna.

Mario is a young father. He has two sons, aged 1 and 2.

At the police headquarters in Muntinlupa, where he was detained, his wife never left his side. From time to time, she would signal her husband to lower down his voice during the interview.

'Wrongly accused'

"I don't care if they hear what I say," he said, referring to the police. "What I am telling is true. I have been wrongly accused."

Carlos, a minor, was sent to the facility of the Department of Social Welfare and Development in Alabang.

On regular days before his arrest, Mario would get up early morning to clean his friend's house and car to earn P300. Then throughout the day he would collect old bottles and newspaper around Soldiers' Hills.

He takes home at least P500 to P750 from his trade if business is good. "I really need to get out of jail soon. I have a family to feed and a mother and brother to support," he said.

Buyer in the neighborhood

Mario denied being part of the group. But he said he knew about its operation, as he had once transported on his brother-in-law's tricycle phone cables, which he claimed he did not know were stolen. He said the cables were brought to a certain Bino.

Bino is the leader of the group of more than 10 members, according to Mario. "One of the members of the group had told me that if I wanted to earn extra income I should join them," he said.

When he asked the group what the job was, he was told that all he had to do was cut wires.

One day, at around 1 a.m., Mario and his brother-in-law brought a coiled wire that was as thick as a bicycle tire to Bino. He earned P20 for the delivery.

When they arrived at Bino's place, four more tricycles had shown up. "But I am just driving the tricycle," he said, adding that he did not know anything about electrical wiring as he only finished Grade 5.

"I declined to join the group. What if I get electrocuted while cutting the wire? Do you think someone like me who only finished Grade 5 would be able to know something about wiring?" he said.

They strike before midnight

Asked when the group strikes, he said the group usually climbed the electric posts in Soldiers' Hills and in Green Heights Subdivisions to steal phone cables between 11 p.m. and 12 midnight.

Then, the stolen wires would be lugged on tricycles at around 1 a.m., he said.

Once burned, the copper would then be sold to a junk shop, which he did not know where.

One spool of phone wire was sold for P2,000 and the amount was enough to sustain the group's addiction to drugs, he said.

"That's why I am pleading to PLDT and the police that I would help them arrest the group in exchange for my freedom," he said in tears.

However, shortly after the interview, the police transferred him to the Tunasan City Jail.

JIMENEZ

Mark Jimenez back in Manila Saturday – NBI

CONTROVERSIAL former congressman Mark Jimenez is finally being deported to the Philippines after serving a two-year jail term in the United States, according to a National Bureau of Investigation official.

Jimenez, aka Mario Crespo, is scheduled to leave Harrisburg, Pennsylvania on Dec. 16 and will arrive in Manila on Dec. 17, said Ricardo Diaz, the chief of the NBI's Interpol division.

Diaz said he got the information from Kevin Peters of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement office of the US Department of Homeland Security.

Jimenez was supposed to have been deported last Nov. 22 but his release from the Federal Correctional Institution in Allenwood, Pennsylvania was reset to Dec. 13 after he reportedly committed an infraction.

"Because Jimenez is not an American citizen or an immigrant or green card holder, he is not allowed to stay [even] for a day following his release from prison," said Diaz.

He added that no escorts would be provided for the controversial businessman during his flight home.

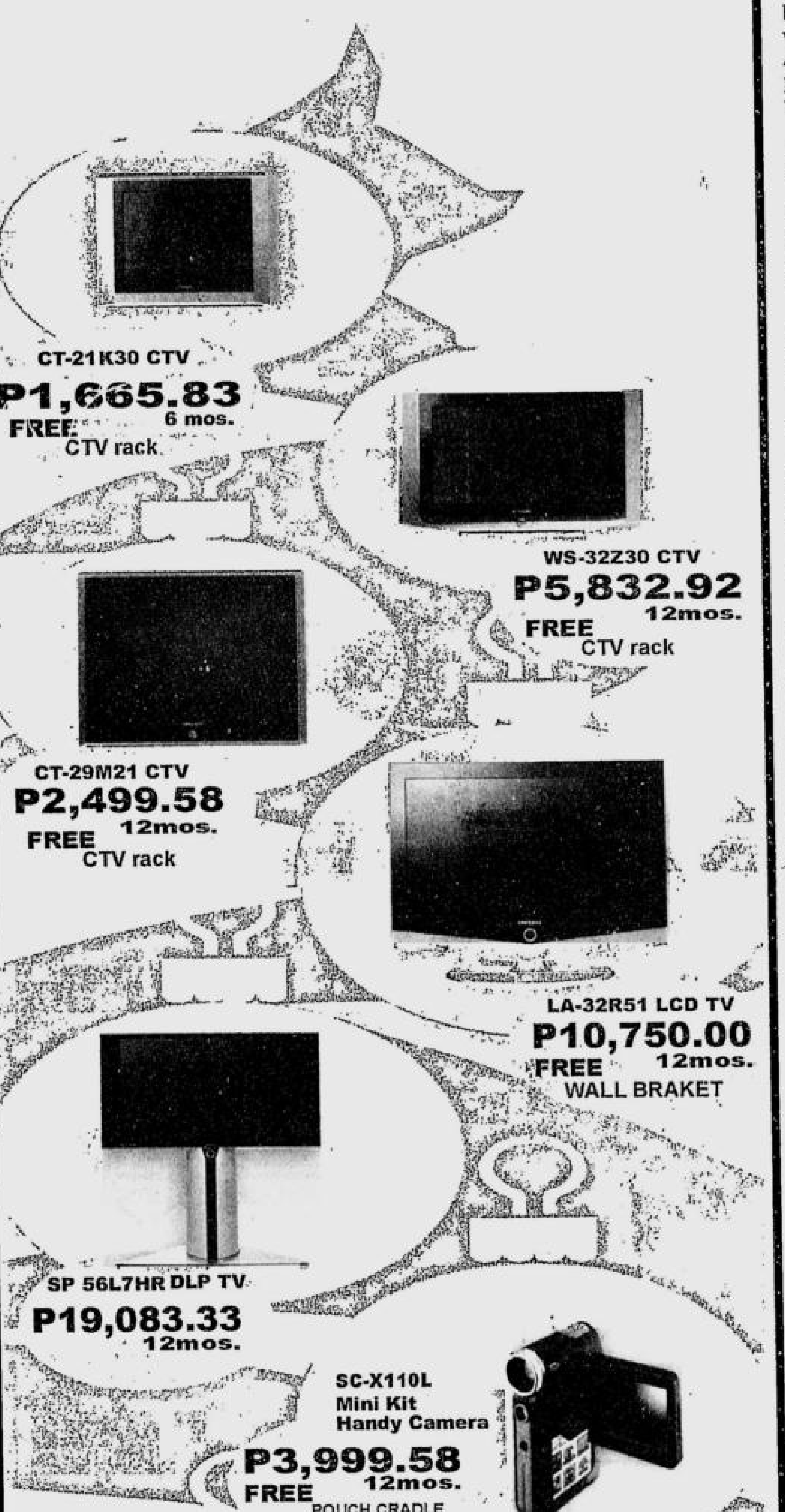
"There will be no need for escorts because Jimenez was charged with and convicted for a white-collar and non-violent crime," Diaz said.

Jimenez, who lost his Manila congressional seat in early 2003 for engaging in vote-buying, was convicted by a US court in November 2003 on charges of mail fraud, tax evasion and illegal campaign contributions.

The Southern District Court of Miami sentenced Jimenez to 27 months in prison after he pleaded guilty to election conspiracy and tax-evasion charges. He was also ordered to pay $1.2 million in fines.

The former representative of Manila's 6th district was "voluntarily" extradited to the US on Dec. 26, 2002 after a lengthy legal struggle that went all the way to the Supreme Court. He started serving his sentence on Jan. 5, 2004.

Margaux Ortiz



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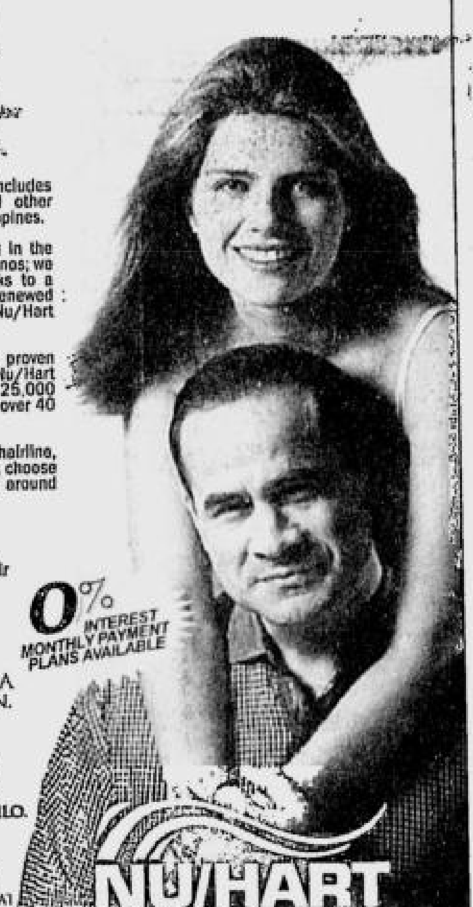

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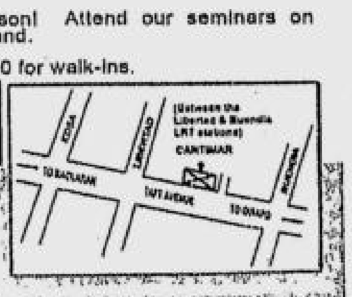

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President Roh Moo-hyun and First Lady
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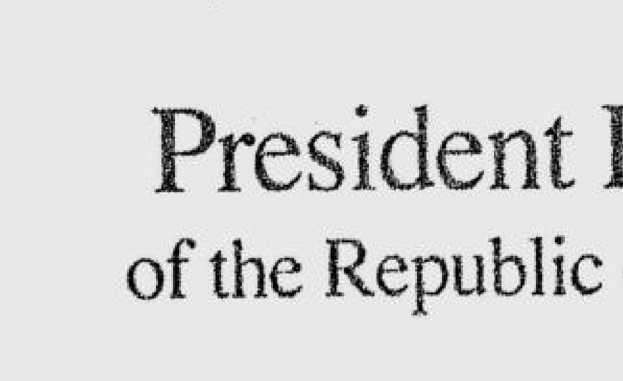

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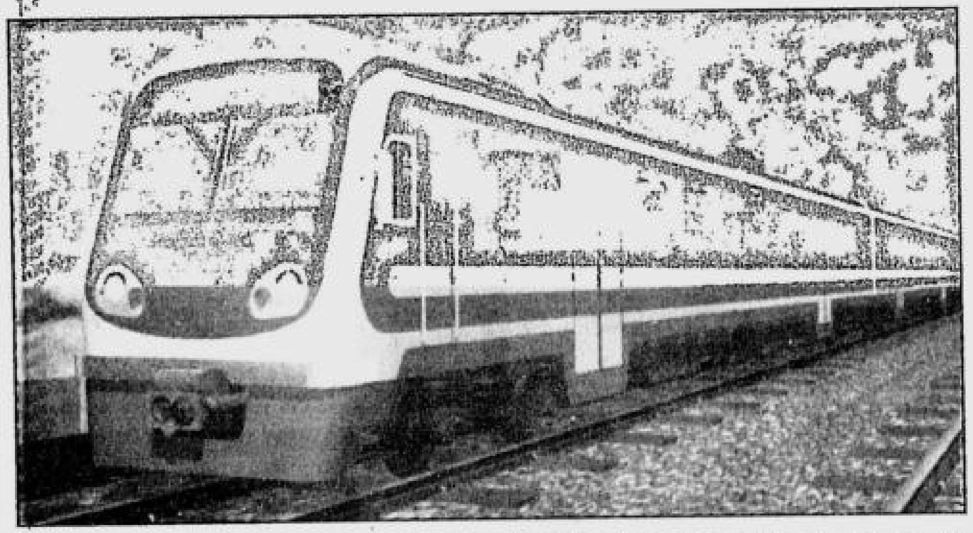

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The shorter trip will be a welcome relief to almost 80 percent of Metro Manila residents who make an average number of 2.3 trips daily. At present, they have to put up with longer travel time in road-based public utility vehicles due to their lower travel speed. Buses average 12 kph and jeepneys, 9 kph within Metro Manila. In the adjacent municipalities, buses do around 23kph and jeepneys, 21 kph. Apparently, traffic conditions in the metropolis have deteriorated significantly. Commuters now have to go through much longer travel time compared to 1983. And perhaps due to our increasing population, the number of commuters has grown considerably. Add to that the steady decline of the quality of our buses and jeepneys.

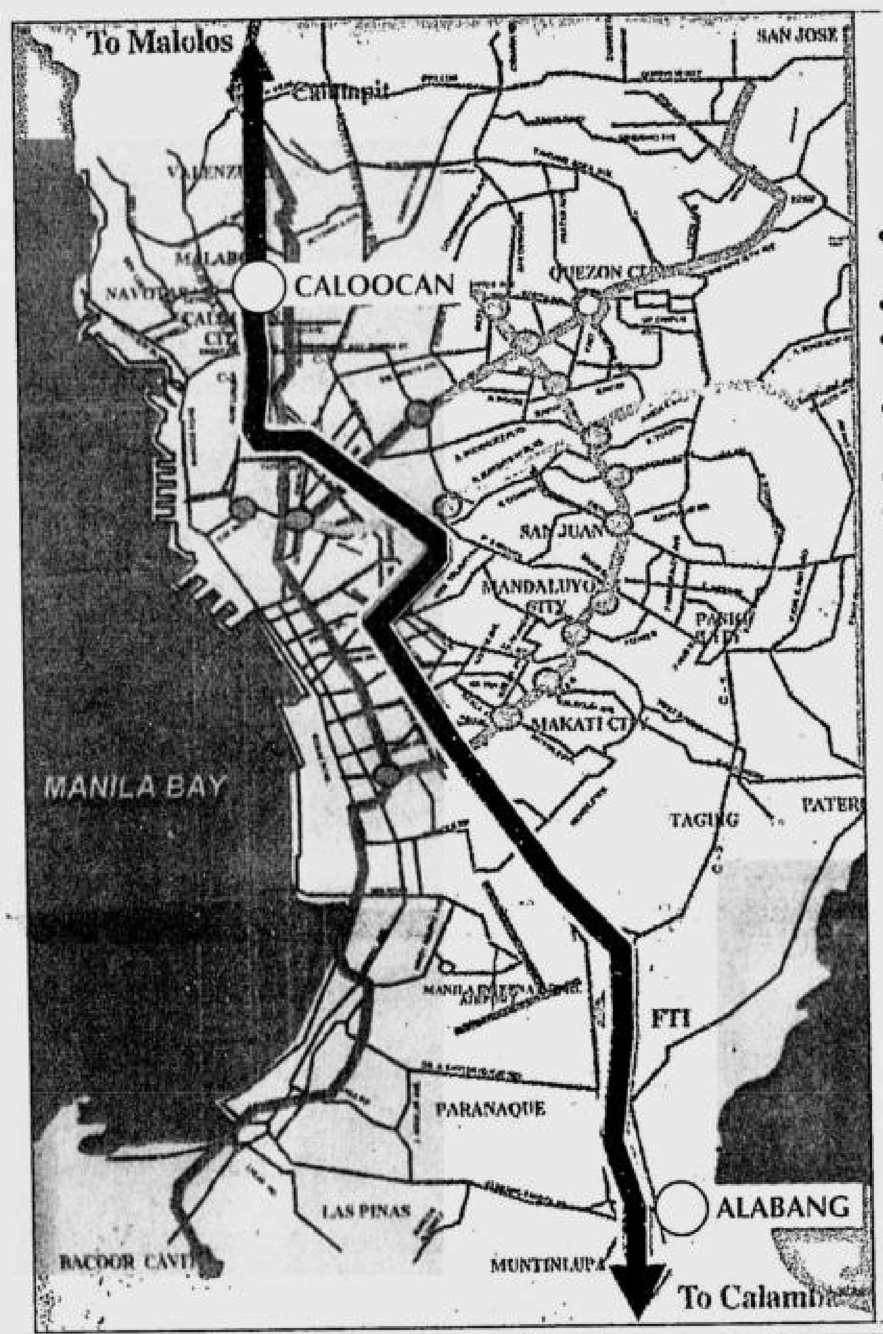
The Northrail-Southrail Linkage Project, a joint undertaking of the governments of the Philippines and Korea, is estimated to cost US$ 126.76 million. The initial phase will be financed by the Korean government, which will extend US$50.42 million. About 70% or US$35 million of this will come from a concessional loan from the Economic Development Cooperation Fund (EDCF) of Korea. The balance will be in the form of export credit from the Korean Export-Import Bank(KOEXIM). The loan will carry an interest rate of 2.5% per annum with a 10- year grace period (on principal repayments only, interest to be paid semi-annually) and 20-year repayment period (semi-annually) over a period of 30 years.

Phase 1 of the project will involve the improvement and upgrading of existing PNR facilities such as railroad tracks, stations, flagstops, double tracking from Sucat to Alabang, fencing of station premises, and the provision of protective devices in all level crossings. The project will also involve the raising of the PNR bridge over the Pasig River in Pandacan, the reconstruction of a major bridge in Alabang, and the repair of minor bridges.

Phase 2 will extend the commuter rail service to Laguna, spanning the municipalities of San Pedro, Binan, Sta. Rosa, Cabuyao and Calamba. It will also include the rehabilitation of existing stations and construction of new ones, particularly at Pacita and Sta. Rosa. Repair and reconstruction work will also be done on several bridges in the Laguna area.

Speedy mass transit will definitely be welcomed by businessmen and employees working in the 10 industrial estates operating in the province as well as by local and foreign tourists attracted by Laguna's natural and man-made attractions such as world-class golf courses, theme parks, resorts and historical sites.

With major roads already operating at or near capacity during peak hours; with traffic delays worsened by the loss of highway capacity due to construction of facilities along right-of-way of roads; and with the general deterioration of public utility vehicles; the Northrail-Southrail Linkage Project will definitely be a convenient alternative to the beleaguered Metro Manila commuter.



PROJECT FEATURES

- Project Scope - Caloocan to Alabang, Metro Manila
- Project Distance - 32 km.
- Average travel time, end-to-end, 30-35 min.
- Daily passenger volume - 187,000 passengers
- No. of stations served - 16
- Station locations
  1. Caloocan
  2. Tayuman, Manila
  3. Blumentritt, Manila
  4. Laon-Laan, Manila
  5. Dapitan, Manila
  6. España, Manila
  7. Sta. Mesa, Manila
  8. Pandacan, Manila
  9. Paco, Manila
  10. Vito Cruz, Makati
  11. Buendia, Makati
  12. Pasay Road, Makati
  13. FTI, Taguig
  14. Bicutan, Taguig
  15. Sukat, Muntinglupa
  16. Alabang, Muntinglupa
- Interconnected to Northrail, LRT Lines 1 and 2 and MRT 3
- 21 units new diesel railcars
- Improved safety and maintenance
- Upgraded stations
- Total project cost- US$64.68 million

PROGRAMME

3:30 pm, Thursday, December 15, 2005
PNR Tutuban Main Terminal, Tondo, Manila

1. OVERTURE: AFP BAND

2. ARRIVAL OF:
H.E. GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO
President of the Republic of the Philippines
and the
FIRST GENTLEMAN, ATTY. MIGUEL T. ARROYO

H.E. ROH MOO-HYUN
President of the Republic of Korea
and the
FIRST LADY, MADAME KWON YANG SUK

3. OFFERING OF FLOWERS

4. WELCOME REMARKS:
MR. JOSE MA.I. SARASOLA II
PNR General Manager

5. REMARKS:
H.E. GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO

6. REMARKS:
H.E. ROH MOO-HYUN

7. LOWERING OF TIME CAPSULE:
H.E. ROH MOO-HYUN
assisted by
FIRST LADY, MADAME KWON YANG SUK
and
H.E. GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO
assisted by FIRST GENTLEMAN,
ATTY. MIGUEL T. ARROYO

8. RECESSIONAL: AFP BAND

Master of Ceremonies: ATTY. LYNNA GOYMA-CHUNG

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION & COMMUNICATIONS
PHILIPPINE NATIONAL RAILWAYS
OFFICE OF THE GENERAL MANAGER
PNR Management Center, Torres Bugallon Street, Sangandaan, Caloocan City 1408 Philippines
Telephones: +63(2) 287 3062 or + 63(2) 365 4716 • Facsimile: +63(2) 362 0824

A communist no longer, Tiglao is now ambassador

TIGLAO

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

CALL HIM AMBASSADOR TIGLAO.

The man who served in powerful positions in Malacañang yesterday breezed through the Commission on Appointments and is now en route to what Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago described as his "glorious destination"—as Philippine ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary to Greece.

Despite his "communist past" and his acerbic tongue towards the opposition when he was still spokesperson for President Macapagal-Arroyo, outgoing Presidential Management Staff Chief Rigoberto Tiglao got praises from senators and congressmen and was promptly rewarded with one of the swiftest confirmations in the commission.

After only one brief hearing yesterday, the CA committee on foreign relations chaired by Santiago endorsed Tiglao's appointment to the plenary, which confirmed him promptly. There was not one opposition to his appointment.

Santiago even asked fellow senators Joker Arroyo, Rodolfo Biazon, Juan Ponce Enrile and Luisa "Loi" Estrada, Representatives Imee Marcos, Marcelino Libanan and other commission members to pose for a picture with Tiglao.

Enrile heaped praises on Tiglao, saying his appointment was "not a matter of accident" but a "well-thought out" move by the President.

"We should congratulate ourselves for sending him (to Greece). I am not flattering him, I jailed him," Enrile said, drawing laughter from the audience and a smile from Tiglao who was imprisoned for two years during martial law.

Enrile, defense minister during the Marcos regime, asked why one of Tiglao's children was named Alexandro Kalayaan.

The quick-witted Tiglao said: "He was born just after my release from your prison."

Marcos, committee vice chair, said Tiglao has the reputation of being as nasty and snooty ("*kasing sungit at kasing taray ng kanyang amo*") as the President.

"At times I was forced to learn to be diplomatic. As for the *taray*, I learned that from Senator (Joker) Arroyo," Tiglao said.

When Santiago asked Arroyo if he accepts "paternity" for Tiglao's disposition, Arroyo said: "If he has changed his mind, if he's no longer a communist, that's the biggest argument against communism."

When Santiago asked if he is now a "reconstructed communist," Tiglao said: "I'm more of a simple nationalist this time. I believe that whatever the system or ideology, the important thing is we have to move as a nation."

Tiglao, who was also an economic journalist, served as secretary general of the Rizal politburo of the Communist Party of the Philippines.

Tiglao could not provide a religious explanation for Santiago's question why the President has taken to wearing blue, the color of the Virgin Mary. She attributed this to Tiglao's "spiritually bankrupt past."

Sen. Rodolfo Biazon asked what qualified him to be ambassador.

Tiglao said having served as presidential spokesperson, chief of staff of the President and PMS head during "exciting times" in the President's incumbency gave him a "unique vantage point" of how bureaucracy works.

The CA also confirmed the appointments of foreign service officers Angelo Amonoy and Jerome Castro and career minister Leah Basinang-Ruiz.

The plenary also confirmed 24 colonels and generals including the controversial Lt. Gen. Emmanuel Teodosio, chief of the Visayas Command, and Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan Jr. who is blamed by militants for the deaths of their comrades.

Sen. Serge Osmeña cast a negative vote for Teodosio after grilling him about the relief of Gen. Francisco Gudani as head of Task Force Ranao during the May 2004 election.

Gudani had come out to testify on the alleged election fraud for Ms Arroyo.

Osmeña and Sen. Joker Arroyo also warned Palparan his human rights record would be under watch before he was confirmed.

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Altis 1.8 E A/T	878,000	100,000	66,560	45,836	36,536	26,072	21,038	18,160
Altis 1.6 E A/T	800,000	100,000	59,539	41,000	32,688	23,326	18,822	16,244
Altis 1.6 E M/T	765,000	100,000	56,388	38,831	30,962	22,094	17,828	15,385
Altis 1.6 J M/T	708 000	100,000	51 257	35 297	28 150	20,088	16 209	13,985

MODEL	SRP	DOWNPAYMENT	12	18	24	36	48	60
Innova 2.5 G A/T	1,045,000	100,000	82,039	56,495	45,014	32,122	25,919	22,384
Innova 2.5 G M/T	980,000	100,000	76,188	52,466	41,807	29,834	24,073	20,787
Innova 2.0 G A/T	985,000	100,000	76,638	52,776	42,054	30,010	24,215	20,910
Innova 2.0 G M/T	930,000	100,000	71,687	49,306	39,341	28,074	22,653	19,559
Innova 2.5 E M/T	885,000	100,000	67,636	46,576	37,121	26,489	21,374	18,454
Innova 2.5 J M/T	798,000	100,000	59,804	41,183	32,829	23,427	18,903	16,317
Innova 2.0 J M/T	748,000	100,000	55,303	38,084	30,362	21,667	17,483	15,089

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'Forever in our hearts,' say FPJ family, supporters

From page A1

Hundreds of Fernando Poe Jr.'s fans flocked to his grave as early as 6 a.m., bringing with them pictures of the opposition's standard-bearer during last year's presidential election.

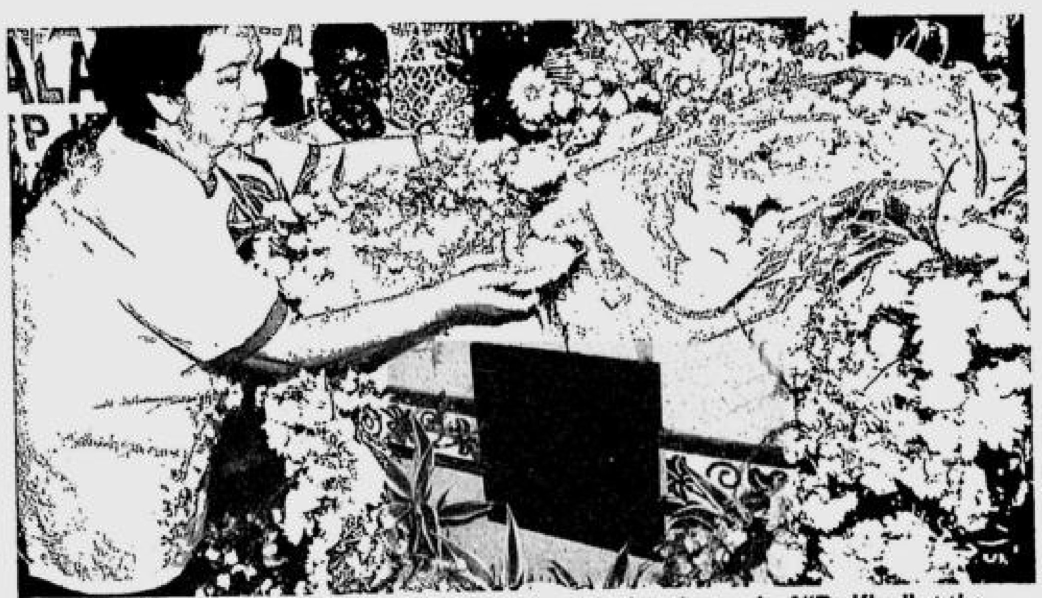
"I was here since Sunday, praying and lighting candles for my idol," Clarita Guinto, 55, said in Filipino.

Guinto said she traveled all the way from Pampanga to commemorate Poe's death.

Guinto brought with her VCDs of the late actor's most popular films, including "Perlas ng Silangan" and "Walang Matigas na Tinapay sa Mainit na Kape."

"We love him very much," a teary-eyed Guinto said, looking at her companions who were crying openly.

Poe died of stroke a day after he collapsed while in the middle of a party.



MEMORIES ARE MADE OF THESE. Floral offerings blanket the tomb of "Da King" at the Manila North Cemetery on his first death anniversary on Wednesday. The outpouring of remembrance brings comfort to his widow Susan Roces. REM ZAMORA

Thank you

Poe's widow, also a former screen star, led supporters in praying beside the tomb, which was covered with yellow chrysanthemums and white roses.

"We would like to thank all the people who continue to support us with their prayers," Roces said in an interview with reporters.

Since her husband died, she has been spending more time with her family and relatives, Roces said.

"I have also been involved in outreach programs and more meaningful endeavors," Roces said.

Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay, actor Rez Cortez and actress Sheryl Cruz were also present during the short ceremony, which began at 8:15 a.m. and ended at 9:30 a.m.

Sto. Domingo Church

Before proceeding to the cemetery, Roces attended Mass at the Sto. Domingo Church in Quezon City.

The widow of the man believed by his supporters to have been cheated by President Macapagal-Arroyo in the 2004 polls said the country may only find peace and prosperity if the government enjoyed the people's trust.

"If we really want quiet, and if we want the economy to improve, we need to bring back the people's trust in government," she said in Filipino.

Speaking to reporters after hearing Mass, Roces said only the person who was truly voted in office can govern well.

"A government that is not being trusted can never effectively lead," she said.

The Mass was a far cry from a year ago when Sto. Domingo Church was filled to the brim with Poe's well-wishers, supporters, and a good number of opposition figures.

Yesterday, however, only about a fourth of the church was filled, with only Binay representing the opposition.

Roces went to church at 7 a.m., surrounded by close family members, including her niece Sheryl Cruz. Later, she was joined by Binay, a key opposition figure.

But aside from bussing each other on the cheek, Roces and Binay did not have much to talk about, as they sat on different pews. After the Mass, Roces entertained questions from the media.

Personal search, not political

But some supporters approached Roces to kiss and hug her.

She said her struggle to find out the truth about last year's elections was not political but personal.

"Our fight is not on the political side. We just want to know what really happened so that it may never happen again," Roces said.

This applies not only in elections but in all aspects of a nation's life, where honesty and accountability are of paramount importance, she said.

Garcillano testimony

Commenting on the House committee hearings in which former Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano was giving testimony, she said she did not know "where it is going."

Later, Roces said she no longer wished to add to the comments that had already been said of Garcillano, whose voice was purportedly caught on tape talking to Ms Arroyo about rigging the elections.

The former screen star said only those who have lost a loved one can understand how she felt on the death anniversary of her husband.

Acceptance of a loved one's death depends on the cause, she said. "In Ronnie's case we understand his medical condition and the limits of science."

FPJ 'smiling' in death mask

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

HIS EYES WERE CLOSED BUT his lips appeared to be smiling even a year after his death.

Preserved in a thin strip of fiberglass, also called a death mask, is the last facial expression of movie icon Fernando Poe Jr. as seen by the hundreds of thousands of his supporters who trooped to his wake last year.

The death mask was taken on the last day of the wake by 75-year-old sculptor Napoleon V. Abueva, a National Artist.

"The mold can be used for reference," Abueva told the INQUIRER as he emerged from his small and dark storage room, carrying the death mask resting on a white rubber mold.

He said the mask could serve as a pattern should the family later decide to build a monument or any project for "the king" of Philippine movies.

But the actor's family has not yet seen the mask. Nor has it been used in any project.

Though still unused, the mask enjoys a company of famous faces inside the dark storage room.

It is stored alongside those of former Sen. Raul Roco and former Manila Archbishop Jaime Cardinal Sin.

Roco and Poe both lost to President Macapagal-Arroyo in the 2004 presidential election.

Abueva had also made a similar mask for assassinated former Sen. Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino Jr.

Poe died of stroke on Dec. 14 last year.

"I thought about making a death mask for (Poe) on the last day of his wake," Abueva said.

When he showed up at the Sto. Domingo Church in Quezon City, which teemed with hundreds of thousands of supporters, allies and fans for almost eight straight days, he could not find any member of the family.

But veteran actress Armida Siguion-Reyna, who saw him at the wake, called up Poe's widow Susan Roces to ask for permission.

Hours before the funeral on Dec. 22, Abueva started making the mask at about 2 a.m.

The chapel had to be closed. Cameramen were barred from taking videos and pictures as Abueva opened the coffin and applied a plaster of Paris solution (which thickens like cement once mixed with water) on the actor's face.

The molding took less than an hour to finish.

Abueva brought the initial mold to his house in Tandang Sora, Quezon City, and worked for a few hours to make another rubber mold. The new mold was used in creating the fiberglass strip accurately capturing the contours of Poe's face.

Abueva said that future sculptures carrying Poe's face could be patterned after the death mask.

Though sculpting could be done by looking at pictures, Abueva said using the death mask as pattern would be much better and more accurate.

Making death masks, he said, was a common practice to honor "great men."

For Poe, greatness took the form of his "immense popularity," touching the lives of the masses through his movies, most of which depicted him as a hero.

Death masks play an important part in ancient funerary beliefs and practices. Other famous people with death masks are Napoleon Bonaparte, Beethoven, Dante and Abraham Lincoln.

Oakwood mutineer escapes, hits GMA

From page A1

He later read a statement on CD, which was distributed to some reporters and which indicated that the escape was planned well ahead in advance.

Faeldon said that the political crisis over allegations that President Macapagal-Arroyo cheated to win the May 2004 election showed the situation had not changed since the Oakwood uprising.

"Events have proven me right. She is corrupt and ruthless and will do everything to stay in power," said Faeldon, one of six ring leaders of the Oakwood event. "I leave now to join the fight for a credible government."

Faeldon also left behind a letter to his fellow detainees with a similar message. He said he was going to do the best way possible to achieve the formation of a "transition government." His lawyer, Roel Pulido, said he received a call from Faeldon last night apologizing for his action.

Oakwood issues remain

"This is his way to remind the world that the AFP hierarchy is acting as if it is above the law and to remind the people that the issues they raised in Oakwood remain to this day," Pulido told the INQUIRER in a telephone interview.

Faeldon was the second mutineer to escape. On Sept. 21, 2004, Marine 2Lt. Junniebert Tubo slipped from the minimum security area at the Marine headquarters in Fort Bonifacio.

Close-in security officers from the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces (Isafp) lost Faeldon while the group was to depart the five-story justice hall, right across the old Makati Police Department (MPD) Headquarters.

"I knew him by name because I often saw him during hearings. I saw him on his way out of the men's room, and I knew it was him because I read his name tag," said building administration officer Eddie San Mateo.

It must have been between 10:30 and 11 a.m., said San Mateo, when he and other employees at the building's ground floor noticed that armed Isafp officers appeared worried and bothered.

"I asked the Isafp [officer] there, and he told me there was one missing. When I asked him who, he told me "*si* Faeldon," San Mateo told the INQUIRER.

Permission to buy fruits

Isafp later confirmed that Faeldon had escaped, and said security officers lost him after he sought permission to buy some fruits in a nearby fruit stand. A crowded flea market is just a sprint away. Jeepneys bound for Edsa in Guadalupe and Taft Avenue in Manila plied streets a short walk away.

Faeldon and 29 other officers had shown up around 8:30 a.m. at the sala of Makati Regional Trial Court Branch 148 Judge Oscar Pimentel.

As on other hearing days, the group of mutineers traveled on a coaster escorted by an Army truck of armed soldiers.

Each in full military regalia, the group was escorted up Pimentel's sala on the 4th floor. Because Pimentel was on leave to attend to a family emergency, the soldiers took time to confer with their lawyers who worked out a new hearing schedule.

Discreet

The convoy was to head back to Camp Aguinaldo but was held up when a head count revealed one mutineer was missing. They remained in the area until past noon.

Faeldon's disappearance was so discreet that there was no commotion inside the building or on F. Zobel Street. The MPD Tactical Operations Center wasn't even aware of what was going on, police said. The rest of the afternoon went by as usual at the old Justice Hall.

Brig. Gen. Marlu Quevedo, Isafp chief, said a manhunt had been ordered for Faeldon. Quevedo said he had also placed seven Isafp escorts under restriction while facing investigation for the escape.

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MC Home Depot-Fort Bonifacio
Metro Point Mall-Pasay

LUZON

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Abanao Square-Baguio
Fernandez-Dagupan
Miranda-Angeles
Santiago-Isabela
F. Tañedo-Tarlac
Zamora-Meycauayan
San Agustin-San Fernando
Olongapo-Rizal Avenue
Sanciangco-Cabanatuan
Tierra Nueva-Alabang
Villa Mendoza-A. Santos
Binakayan-Kawit
Aguinaldo Highway-Dasmariñas
Waltermart-Sta. Rosa
Rizal St.-Legaspi
Gen. Luna-Naga
CM Recto-Lipa
North Calamba-Crossing
Kumintang-Batangas
Quezon Ave.-Lucena

VISAYAS

Osmeña Blvd.-Cebu
Cebu-Ayala
Taboan-Cebu
North-Mandaue
Burgos-Ormoc
Goldenfield-Bacolod
Iloilo-Quezon St.

MINDANAO

Vamenta-Cagayan De Oro
CM Recto-Davao
Sta. Ana-Davao
Santiago St.-General Santos

BRANCHES OPEN ON DECEMBER 30
Banking Hours: 9am - 12nn

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SM City-Fairview
Greenhills Shopping Center
Robinson's Galleria-Ortigas
Robinson's Metro East-Cainta
Taytay National Highway
M. De Santos-Ilaya
Waltermart-Makati

LUZON

Castro-Laoag
Session Road-Baguio
Perez-Dagupan
Bonifacio St.-Tuguegarao
Nepo Mart-Angeles
Cauayan-Isabela
Pulilan Junction-Bulacan
Dolores-Pampanga
Times Square-Subic
Maharlika-Cabanatuan
Imus Aguinaldo-Highway
Doña Manuela 5-Las Piñas
Rustan's Laguna-Technopark
FCIE Dasmariñas-Cavite
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No Christmas furlough, just short visits for Erap

By Nelson F. Flores

THE SANDIGANBAYAN SPECIAL DIVISION yesterday denied former President Joseph Estrada's request for a 12-day Christmas "furlough" but gave him permission to spend two nights away from detention at his Tanay rest house to attend the funeral wake of his elder brother and visit his ailing centenarian mother at a hospital.

In addition, the court also allowed Estrada to spend Christmas and New Year's Eve with his mother "wherever she maybe."

In granting Estrada's request to be allowed to attend the wake of his brother, Antonio Ejercito, the court directed that he leave his rest house in Tanay at 7 p.m. today and proceed straight to the Santuario de San Jose in Greenhills, San Juan, where his brother's body has lain in state since Sunday.

The 73-year-old Ejercito died from colon cancer at the San Juan Medical Center early last Sunday and is to be buried at the San Juan Municipal Cemetery on Friday.

The former President was allowed to stay overnight at the church but was forbidden to go to his home on nearby Polk Street or to attend his brother's funeral procession and burial.

Immediately after the last memorial service at noon, Estrada has been directed to proceed to the San Juan Medical Center where his mother has been confined since last Tuesday. He is to stay there until 7 a.m. on Saturday when he is to be escorted back to his rest house in Tanay.

The court ordered that Estrada be subjected to the "no media interview policy" and the usual security arrangements as seen fit by the PNP during his stay at the church and the hospital.

With respect to the holidays, the court said it would allow Estrada to leave Tanay at 5 p.m. on Dec. 24 and Dec. 31 to go to his mother "wherever she may be" and stay with her until 5 p.m. the following day on both occasions.

"The court has taken notice of the advanced age of Doña Mary Ejercito in granting the defense motion," said Special Division chair and Sandiganbayan Presiding Justice Teresita de Castro.

In both instances, the court said, Estrada would be subjected to the security arrangement imposed by the PNP and the "no media interview policy."

Former Senator Rene Saguisag, one of Estrada's defense lawyers, thanked the court for "its compassion and understanding."

Saguisag had asked the court for a 12-day Christmas furlough from Dec. 23 to Jan. 3, 2006, but Special Prosecutor Dennis Villa-Ignacio opposed this, noting that the court had already rejected a similar petition in December 2001.

When the defense panel agreed to modify its motion for a "Christmas furlough" to one asking simply for the shorter "Christmas and New Year Passes," Villa-Ignacio posed no objection.

Villa-Ignacio said he was glad the court did not allow Estrada to go to his Polk Street residence "for that would complicate matters."

He said he did not object to Estrada's visit with his mother because "she is almost 101 years old and I think it's only proper that he spend some time with his mother in her remaining time."

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Election returns altered inside Congress – Loren

By Cynthia D. Balana

THE ALTERING OF ELECTION RETURNS from Lanao del Sur occurred right inside Congress as borne out by the "spurious" returns being re-tabulated by the Supreme Court sitting as the Presidential Electoral Tribunal (PET), the defeated vice presidential candidate Loren Legarda claimed yesterday.

Legarda made the accusations as the PET recount of votes for the May 2004 vice presidential election went into its third day yesterday, with the review of at least 180 ballot boxes being reviewed completed. There are an average of about 150 ballots per precinct.

She said the crime could have been perpetrated by the operatives of her rival, Vice President Noli de Castro who beat Legarda in the vice presidential election in 2004.

The PET is conducting a simultaneous recount of ballots from Cebu and a re-tabulation of the returns from Lanao del Sur, the subject of an election protest by Legarda.

Legarda stressed that she was not accusing House Speaker Jose de Venecia or members of the House but De Castro's "administrative operatives" in Congress, or whoever had access to the ballot boxes while they were in the custody of Congress.

"Lest we forget, there had been persistent reports that last January and February, operatives of the administration had sneaked inside Congress reportedly to tamper with the contents of the ballot boxes being kept there," she said.

Lawyer Romulo Macalintal, De Castro's lead counsel, yesterday said that there was no tampering of the returns and challenged Legarda to prove that her Comelec copies were not the ones that were tampered with.

"How can she make the accusation that the copies in Congress are not the ones that are authentic? How sure is she that her Comelec copies are not tampered with? Why is it that the returns that are not in her favor are the ones not authentic and those that are in her favor are authentic?" Macalintal asked.

Legarda said her theory about the rigging having been done in Congress was being borne out by the allegedly dubious ERs examined from Balindong town, particularly when these were compared with the copies of the ERs belonging in the Commission on Elections.

On Monday, Legarda said the copies of the ERs bearing the same serial numbers should be identical to one another whether the ER copies belong to Congress, the Comelec, the political parties or Namfrel.

She stressed that discrepancies in the copies of the ERs were foolproof evidence that fraud had been committed in favor of her rival before and after the 2004 May elections.

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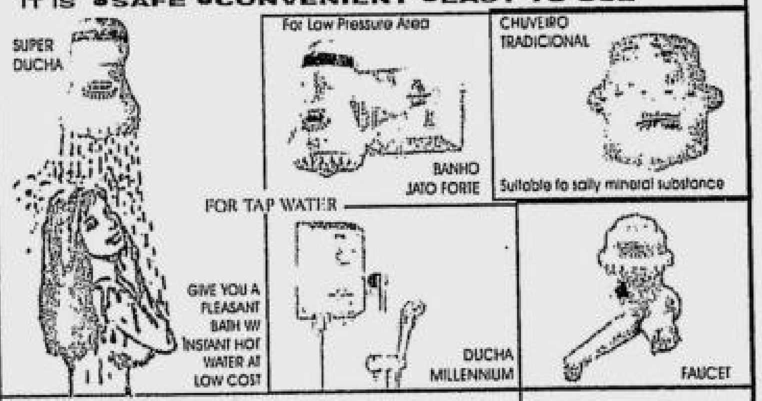

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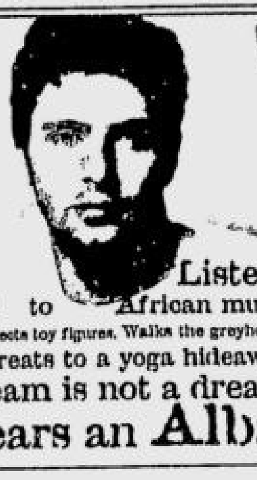

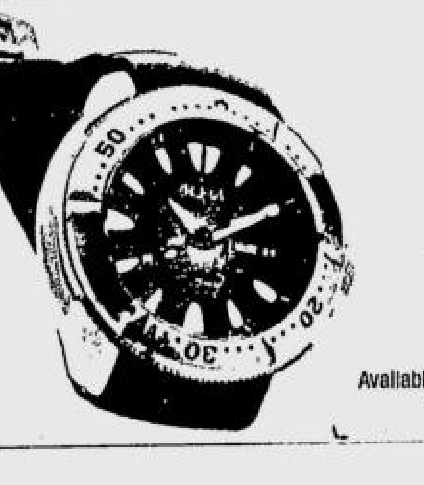

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Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

European probe supports claims of CIA prison flights

PARIS—A EUROPEAN RIGHTS BODY TUESDAY BACKED ALLEGATIONS of secret CIA prisons, saying that the United States appeared to have illegally abducted and detained individuals and that some European governments may have colluded.

A report to the Council of Europe concluded that "the information gathered to date reinforced the credibility of the allegations concerning the transport and temporary detention of detainees—outside all judicial procedure—in European countries."

The interim findings were presented by Dick Marty, a Swiss parliamentarian leading the probe by the 46-member rights and democracy body.

"Legal proceedings under way in certain (European) countries appear to show that individuals were abducted and transferred to other countries without respect for any legal assistance procedures," he said in a statement.

The United States has come under growing international pressure over claims first made six weeks ago that the Central Intelligence Agency has illegally used European airports and airspace to transport suspected Islamic extremists between countries without legal process.

Reports have emerged of many hundreds of CIA flights, suspected of carrying undeclared prisoners across European airspace, since the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks in the United States.

As rapporteur of the Council of Europe's justice and human rights committee, Marty has been charged with determining the truth of the allegations—as well as claims that certain European governments may have breached the European convention on human rights by aiding the operation.

Citing anonymous informants from inside intelligence agencies as well as published press reports, Marty told journalists that "the allegations that have been made are receiving day by day more weight."

Substantiating evidence for the claims, he said, came from US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice because, on a recent trip to Europe, she failed to deny categorically that detainees were transported or held in Europe. *AFP*

YEAR'S IMAGES—A daughter of Jalil Shaalan, a security guard at a local school, reacts after her father was gunned down in front of her outside of the school compound by unknown shooters in the Amarayah district of Baghdad, Iraq, in this July 21, 2005, photo. AP

US scientist questions S. Korean human cloning study

WASHINGTON—A US STEM CELL EXPERT who lent his name and credibility to South Korean cloning pioneers asked that his name be removed from their landmark scientific paper on Tuesday and questioned whether the work had been falsified.

Dr. Gerald Schatten of the University of Pittsburgh asked the journal Science to take his name off a human cloning study published by Woo Suk-hwang and colleagues at Seoul National University in May of 2005.

Hwang and colleagues made history in 2004 when they reported they had cloned the first human embryo—not to make a baby, but to derive embryonic stem cells for scientific and medical research.

In May of 2005 they reported they had cloned cells from people with diseases, to make batches of cells useful for studying those diseases. And in August they cloned the first dog, Snuppy.

The accomplishments put Hwang and South Korea at the forefront of cloning and stem cell research at a time when US politics and a debate over the ethics of cloning humans are limiting efforts.

"My careful reevaluations of published figures and tables, along with new problematic information, now casts substantial doubts about the paper's accuracy," Schatten said in a letter to Science, also released to Reuters.

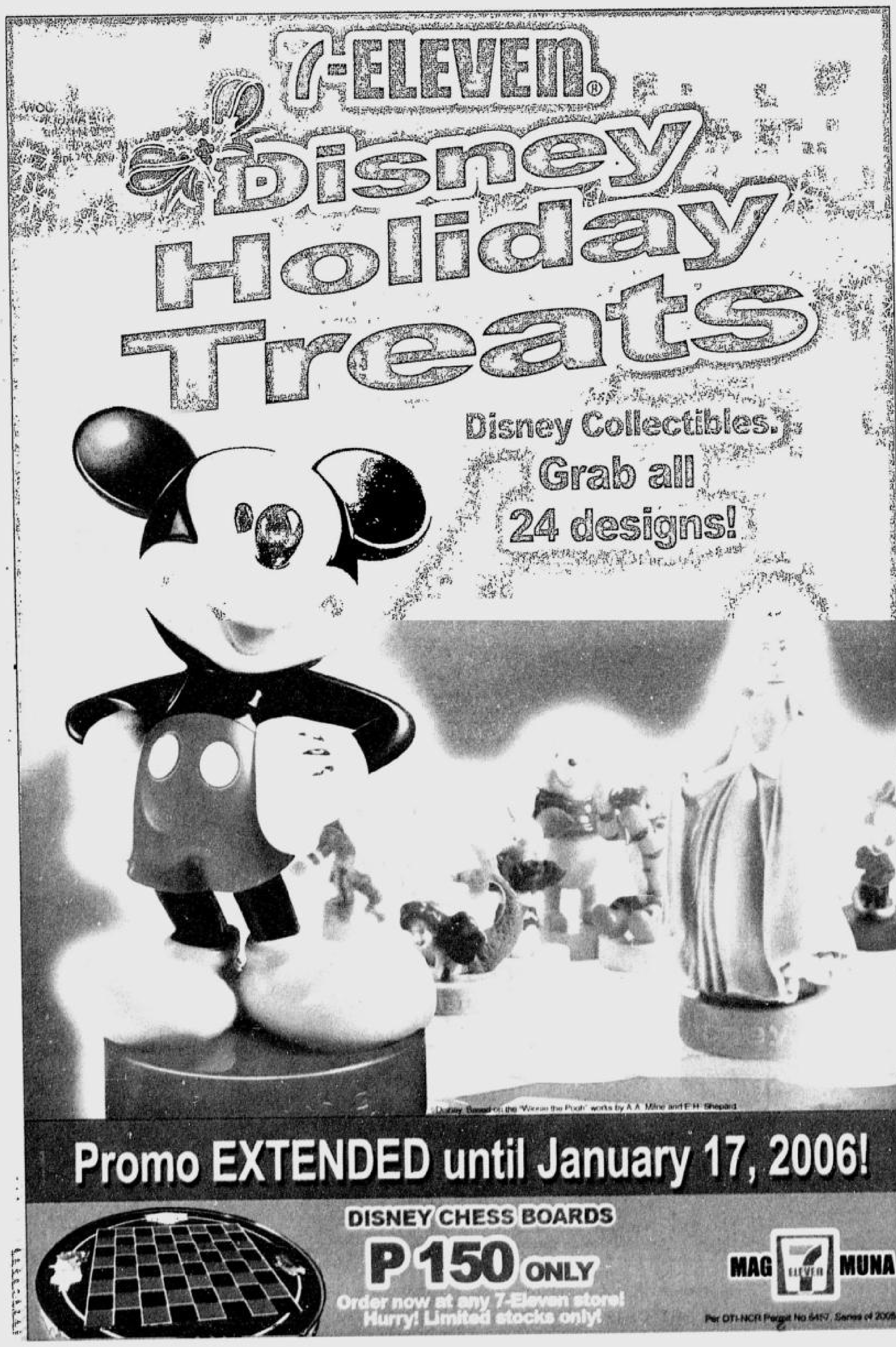
"Over the weekend, I received allegations from someone involved with the experiments that certain elements of the report may be fabricated."

He gave no further details.

Science said it was declining to remove Schatten's name from the paper. "There is no method for retracting authorship," Science said in a statement.

"As of this writing, Science is not aware of any scientists claiming that the data are fraudulent."

Reuters



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After 2,150 American deaths, $250B spending, US hopeful about Iraq poll

BAGHDAD—AFTER LOSING more than 2,300 troops dead and spending over $250 billion in Iraq, the United States and its allies have an awful lot invested in Thursday's parliamentary election.

The vote will not just determine Iraq's first full-term government since the fall of Saddam Hussein in 2003, it will also act as significant waymark towards withdrawing US troops from a war that is increasingly unpopular with Americans.

Not surprisingly, Western diplomats and analysts have been setting benchmarks for what they think will constitute a successful poll—one which will give Iraqis hope and allow Americans to think realistically about bringing troops home.

"If you get 60 percent voter turnout with pretty even voting across the country, with not too many violent incidents, that would be successful," said one Western official in Baghdad's Green Zone who, like others, asked not to be identified.

His target was more sober than some upbeat predictions of 80 percent-plus turnout and minimal violence being bandied about in background briefings by some Western embassies in the past week.

Sixty percent turnout among Iraq's 15 million eligible voters is hardly an ambitious target.

About 59 percent of eligible voters cast ballots in January's election for an interim government, a poll largely boycotted by minority Sunni Arabs who were dominant under Saddam and who now spearhead a bloody insurgency.

Turnout rose to 64 percent in October's constitutional referendum, which Sunnis narrowly failed to vote down.

Hussein al-Hindawi, chair of the UN-backed Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq, said this week he believed the turnout in Thursday's poll would top 70 percent.

US President George W. Bush is likely to need such numbers before he can tout the election as an unqualified success.

Bush has held up Najaf and Mosul as examples of progress in reconstruction efforts, but the plaudits ring hollow to foreign journalists who still cannot walk the streets of those cities without body armor and significant military protection.

Bush has made three speeches in an offensive to counter sliding public support for the war. Democratic Sen. Robert Byrd said this month the conflict had already cost America $256 billion and asked how much more would be needed.

As for the human toll, almost 2,150 US troops have died since the invasion, as well as almost 200 from Britain and other allies. Tens of thousands of Iraqis have been killed. *Reuters*

WORLDBRIEFS

Holocaust is a 'myth,' says Iran president

TEHRAN—Iran's hardline President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad launched a fresh attack against Israel on Wednesday, dismissing the Holocaust as a "myth" and saying the Jewish state should be moved as far away as Alaska. "They have invented a myth that Jews were massacred and place this above God, religions and the prophets," the outspoken president said in a speech carried live on state television. "If somebody in their country questions God, nobody says anything, but if somebody denies the myth of the massacre of Jew, the Zionist loudspeakers and the governments in the pay of Zionism will start to scream," he said. "Our proposal is this: Give a piece of your land in Europe, the United States, Canada or Alaska so they (the Jews) can create their own state," he said. "Be certain that if you do that, the Iranian people will no longer protest against you and will support your decision," said Ahmadinejad, who was speaking to thousands of people in the southeastern province of Sistan-Baluchestan. *AFP*

Indonesia's ex-election chief jailed for graft

JAKARTA—Indonesia's former election chief was sentenced to seven years in jail on Wednesday for corruption in the latest of a series of trials seen as a test of the government's commitment to tackle graft. The high-profile case against Nazaruddin Sjamsuddin, along with several other commissioners and a handful of the agency's staff, came after the body was widely praised for its running of Indonesia's first direct presidential vote last year. The prosecution had said the once-respected political scientist received kickbacks from an insurance firm that won a contract related to holding the elections. After striking a deal worth 14.8 billion rupiah ($1.5 million), the election commission's treasurer asked the firm to hand over 34 percent of that amount and the kickback was parceled out among members of the body, prosecutors said. *Reuters*

LEBANESE deputy member Gebran Tueni waves after being elected member of parliament in this May 21, 2005 photo. REUTERS

Lebanon mourns slain anti-Syria press magnate

BEIRUT—SCHOOLS, SHOPS AND BUSINESSes closed down in Lebanon on Tuesday to mourn anti-Syrian press magnate and legislator Gebran Tueni, whose killing threatened to plunge the country into political turmoil.

Tueni was killed on Monday by a car bomb in a Christian suburb of Beirut along with three other people in the third political assassination since former Prime Minister Rafik al-Hariri was killed in February.

"Gebran Tueni did not die, an-Nahar carries on," said the frontpage banner headline of Beirut's leading Arabic-language an-Nahar newspaper, published by Tueni.

The 48-year-old Tueni's most fiery criticism of Syria and its role in Lebanon often came in weekly editorials splashed across the newspaper's front page.

Many Lebanese politicians blamed Syria for Tueni's killing but Damascus was quick to deny any involvement. The killing, however, strained the domestic political scene where Syria still has powerful allies.

"Enough," was the headline of al-Bayrak daily.

A large anti-Syrian political grouping met at an-Nahar offices and called for a general strike and a mass turnout for Tueni's funeral on Wednesday.

Huge protests after Hariri's death forced Syria to bow to world pressure in April and end 29 years of military presence in Lebanon.

"We are facing a real state of war … aiming at preventing the emergence of a (sovereign) state in Lebanon," Christian politician Samir Geagea told LBC television.

Five Shiite Muslim ministers close to Syria suspended participation in the government after it voted on Monday night to seek a UN investigation into a series of assassinations that have rocked Lebanon over the past 14 months.

A sixth Christian minister loyal to pro-Syrian President Emile Lahoud also walked out of the session.

The suspension of Shiite participation is the most serious political setback for the five-month-old government of Prime Minister Fouad Siniora. The 24-member cabinet is delicately balanced on sectarian lines and the move leaves the government without participation from the largest sect, the Shiites.

The Shiite ministers, loyal to Hizbollah and Amal groups, opposed the call for a UN inquiry into the killing of Tueni and others, but were outvoted by ministers who campaigned with Tueni for Syria's withdrawal.

The government also called on the United Nations to form a tribunal of an "international character" to try suspects in the killing of Hariri.

Syria on Tuesday rejected UN accusations it was hampering an inquiry into Hariri's killing and complained of violations in the questioning of five officials.

"We disagree with the inaccurate remarks in the (UN) report that indicate slowness on the part of Syria in offering full cooperation with the work of the international investigation committee," it said in a statement.

The UN inquiry team said in an interim report it had fresh evidence to reinforce earlier findings of Syrian involvement in Hariri's killing. *Reuters*

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readersadvocate@inquirer.com.ph
Tel. No. 897-8808, Loc. 342; Cell Phone No. 0917-805-7412

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Hanging on

EDITORIAL

IF THEY HAVE EVEN JUST AN IOTA OF DELICADEZA left in their systems, Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos and all but one of the incumbent election commissioners should heed the Senate's call for their resignation. The Senate sounded the call Monday, after getting the report of the blue ribbon committee finding the commissioners and the members of the Comelec Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) criminally liable for awarding an "egregiously fraudulent" contract to Mega Pacific Consortium. The P1.3-billion contract was for the supply of computers to be used in elections.

The blue ribbon committee said Abalos and the commissioners had taken part in an "anomalous bidding and procurement" process that saw the BAC manipulating the bidding to favor the consortium. "What the Comelec has done is unparalleled in its brazen and unmitigated transgression of the generally accepted norms and standards of public bidding and [in its] contempt for the very rules it has adopted," the committee said. "These glaring anomalies indicate utter irresponsibility on the part of the BAC and the Comelec en banc for which they should be held accountable."

Because of this scandal, the blue ribbon committee went on to say, "the integrity of the Comelec has been irreparably compromised; it is damaged institution...weighed down by this ugly anomaly." And since it could not conduct "a clean and honest bidding and procurement, how can it be expected to conduct clean and honest elections?" The remedy, it said, is for the commissioners and the BAC members to "vacate their positions."

There's really nothing new in all these—from the committee's finding of fraud to the strong words of condemnation and even its demand for serious sanctions. Almost two years ago, in January 2004, the Supreme Court nullified the contract, saying Comelec officials had acted in an "illegal, imprudent and hasty" manner when they awarded it to Mega Pacific. The Comelec "awarded the contract not only in clear violation of law and jurisprudence, but also in reckless disregard of its own bidding rules and procedures," the Court pointed out. It ordered the Comelec to terminate the contract, directed the Office of the Ombudsman to charge everyone involved and asked the Office of the Solicitor General to recover all the money that had been paid to Mega Pacific.

With the Senate joining the Supreme Court, the Comelec has earned the dubious distinction of not only getting a public scolding but also having its top officials labelled as crooks by two of the government's highest institutions. But instead of feeling chastened by the spanking from the Senate, Abalos claimed to have been shocked by the report. "I was shocked," he said, while pointing out that the Ombudsman was investigating the case. He said he and other Comelec officials thought the Senate had already dropped its own inquiry, leaving the matter to the Ombudsman. "How would you feel if you were in our shoes?" he asked.

Well, some officials would probably feel humiliated enough to hide away from the public. Others would probably feel sorry for the mess they created and leave their offices in atonement. But Abalos and company? They claim to be hurting from the harsh words being thrown at them. But it would seem that only sticks and stones would break their resolve to hang on, until they are dragged out of their offices, kicking and screaming.

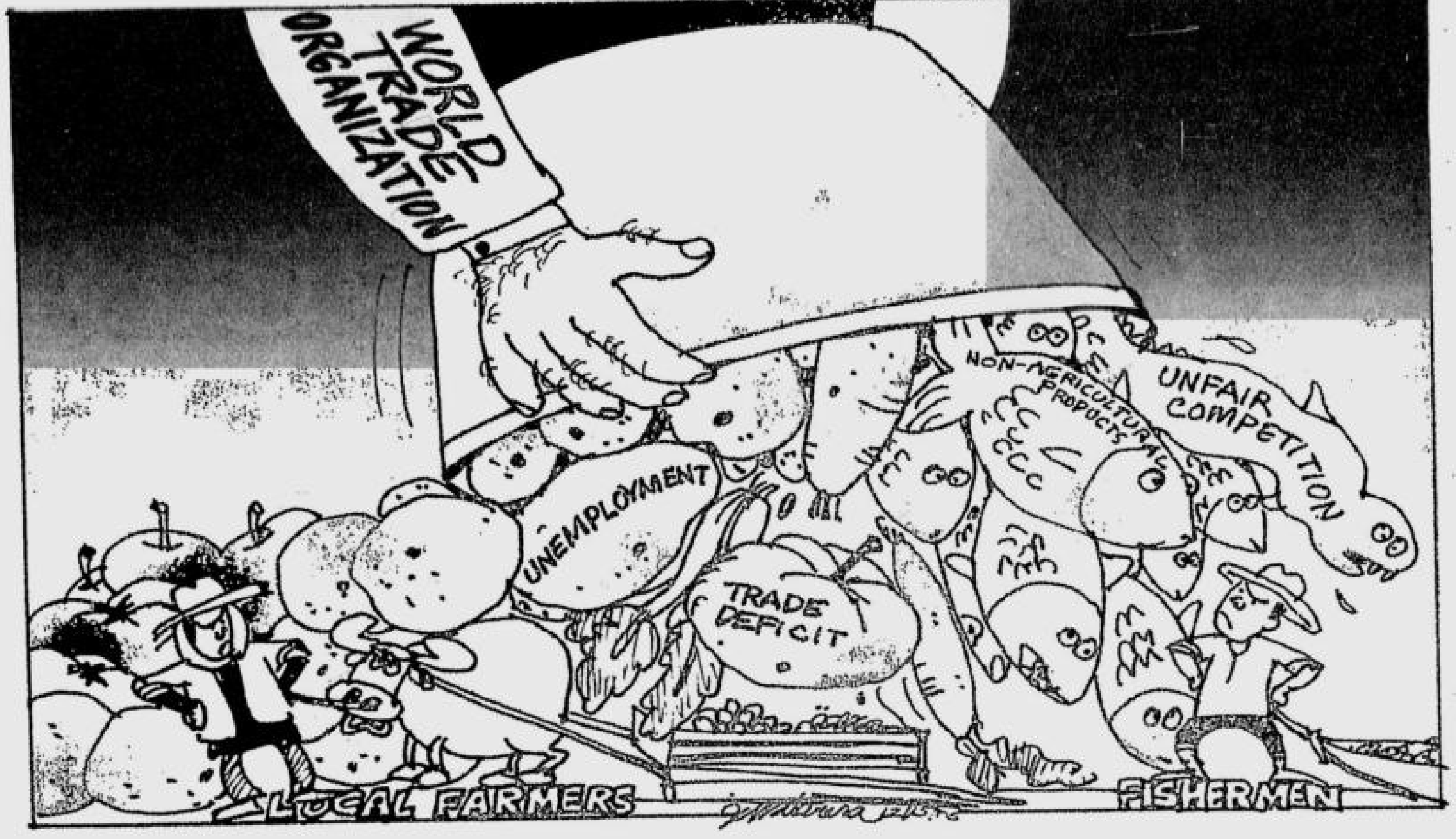
Paid news

FOREIGN COMMENT

RECENT REPORTS HAVE REVEALED THAT MILITARY "INFORmation officers" have been writing favorable articles, translating them into Arabic and then having contractors bring them to Iraq's varied newspapers and pay for their publications. Known payments vary from $50 to $1,500. The articles were one-sided and a military official involved in the process says "absolute truth" was not a requirement for the articles.

Having the US military pay for positive press is detrimental to advancing stability in the country. Military officials say the paid stories balance the negative news the Iraqi media publish about the American military. Such rationale does not justify the action.

The Poughkeepsie Journal (Poughkeepsie, New York)



'Hard as flint'

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

WHAT HAS A HOSPICE, IN A HUMID TONDO side road, got to do with "A Christmas Carol"—the 1843 classic that Charles Dickens wrote from ideas gathered during night strolls through cold London streets?

We were in Tondo just to hand over a letter for a member of the Missionary of Charity sisters, which was founded by Mother Teresa. But in the star-lantern-festooned front yard, one bumped into Dickens' world of Christmases past, present and yet to come.

About 25 kids, from 3 to 8 years of age, milled around. In blue-lined sari habits, three nuns were filling, with medicine, bottles thrust forward by scrawny prematurely wrinkled mothers.

"Tuberculosis," explained Sr. Rose Magdalene. "Poverty runs deep here." TB spreads like brushfire in slum homes on short food rations and shoddy sanitation. Reminds you of Bob Crachit who was underpaid 15 shillings a month by Ebenezer Scrooge.

It's one thing to run your finger down statistical tables and note that TB afflicts 540 out of every 100,000 Filipinos. (It's 120 for Malaysians.) But it's gut-wrenching to see that statistic etched into a 3-year-old's pinched features.

These are "immortal creatures, condemned without alternative or choice, to tread paths of jagged flints and stones by brutal ignorance" and an avaricious elite, the 31-year-old Dickens told the Manchester Atheneum. By then, he had the novels "Oliver Twist" and "David Copperfield" under his belt.

Yet, "Christmas is the only time I know of, in the long calendar year, when men and women seem, by one consent, to open their shut-up hearts freely," he wrote.

Even those flush with cash "think of people below them, as if they were really fellow passengers to the grave, and not another race of creatures bound on other journeys."

Dickens wove that theme into "A Christmas Carol." And it resounded as Sister Carisima led us through various Spartan wards that had been scrubbed clean by nuns and volunteers.

"No smell, sir, so unlike our public hospitals," murmured our driver.

"But you should see these early mornings," the nun replied while gently adjusting the blanket of the comatose patient, picked up earlier from a hovel. "Some are wet and move in their beds," she explained, stroking the man's forehead. "It takes time to clean up."

Did Blessed Teresa of Calcutta ingrain into her daughters the gift of understatement? That formation shapes 19 young women, from Korea, Indonesia and the Philippines, now novices in this house. As professed nuns, they have committed their lives to healing the victims in a society of padlocked hearts.

In the women's ward, Sister Carisima pushed back stray locks on a sleeping aged woman and patted the patient's hand in the next bed. *Iniwan sa kalsada* abandoned on the street), she explained. Three beds away was the woman with face seared by acid, splashed on by an abusive husband.

In the next room, a woman sat talking to herself, endlessly folding a handkerchief. "She's a rape victim, so traumatized, she screams when touched," the nun explained. "We have other victims of violence here."

In the open space, 20 aged patients were being fed. And in a large hall, three young sisters led students packing Christmas packets of rice, soap, some sugar and food items, saying the rosary as they worked. "These sisters just made their vows," Sister Carisima explained. "One will be returning to Korea soon," she said.

In Missionary of Charity houses in Binondo, Cebu, Aklan, Calbayog, Davao and other places, Mother Teresa nuns go from house to house. They pinpoint the dirt poor who'll get these small packages. "In every act of kindness, you come face to face with God," Teresa of Calcutta taught.

As in Dickens' time, our social order is one where jewels, luxury gas-guzzlers and bank accounts, padded by graft, gauge self-worth. So, these packets are nothing to that illegal logger who lighted his cigar with P100-bills. Coco-levy magnates or Lichtenstein-numbered bank account holders would sniff at them. Ask Imelda.

And what would these efforts mean for Virgilio Garcillano and Samuel Ong with their patent lies, their equally tainted backers and probers? And rouge military wiretappers? Is their business "bound on other journeys"?

"You were always a good man of business," Scrooge told the ghost of his former partner Jacob Marley. "Business?" wailed the Christmas past wraith, shaking his manacles. "Mankind was my business...mercy, forbearance, benevolence was all my business."

Christmas today comes, as it did 2,000 years ago, to a society where the political, economic and military elite seek only to conserve their loot. Herod and Tiberius Ceasar—and Scrooge—did as much. Few share out their creativity, time and possessions to enable those of skimpy means and confined horizons to rise to "sunlit plains" of humane lives.

A thin crust of Scrooges tosses up leaders equally blind. Few have the insight to see that the poor have as much right as to what is available to the rich. They act as if sharing with the less fortunate is "humbug."

If we "open our shut-up hearts freely," we'll discover they're "hard as flint, from which no steel had ever struck out generous fire, secret and self-contained, and solitary as an oyster," Jonathan Powers writes in "Scrooge Is Here."

"Give love on Christmas Day," the car radio blared on our way back. But Christmas past, present and to come, blend into one for those who daily serve the crushed and the broken. "And they found the Child, with Mary his mother," the ancient story goes.

(*E-mail: juan_mercado@pacific.net.ph*)

Debts

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

I SAW SOME OF MY MOVIE-DIRECTOR friends last Tuesday night at the Mowelfund where FPJ's first anniversary was celebrated with much singing, sadness and very little politics. How time truly flies, I said rather banally, it's been a year already. Mel Chiongo agreed and recalled reflectively that it seemed like only yesterday when he, Joel Lamangan, Carlitos Siguion-Reyna and Bibeth Orteza met with me to tell me why they were voting for FPJ.

That was some months before the elections last year. I had just written a column criticizing my friends on their choice, wondering why they should pander to populism, or indeed commercialism, in their choice of leader of this country—when they themselves had always bucked the odds, demanding exceptionally high standards in their movies. I had said in particular that however well-intentioned FPJ might be, the people surrounding him—many of them the same ones who dragged down the Erap government—assured we would only see another Erap-tive rule.

To a man and woman, they told me FPJ was different from Erap. Though he had some of Erap's advisers advising him, he had many others as well. In any case, they said, he was his own man. While he was not one to abandon friends, especially in their time of need, and to that extent remained with Erap to the last, he was also not one to abandon self-respect, and by that token never once went to Erap to ask for a favor. Above all, they said, he was a good man. He was someone who had much compassion, or *malasakit*, for people. He was someone who had much compassion, or *malasakit*, for the country.

Mel told me last Tuesday he couldn't understand why he felt so inarticulate then, so unable to express his convictions other than to say FPJ was a good man. But upon reflection, which he did over time, he found that far from falling short of the mark, that idea said everything. FPJ was a good man, and for Mel at least, that was the most compelling reason to vote for him.

A year and a half later, I could only sympathize completely. At a time when our values are being perverted every which way—where lie is made truth and truth lie, where greed and crookedness are rewarded, and honesty and simplicity are punished, where the guardians of morality become the protectors of infamy and the people are left to rot in abject cynicism—simply being good shines dazzlingly like a shaft of light in deepest darkness.

I do not know if FPJ would have escaped the clutches of Erap's advisers. But I'd like to think that anyone who remained loyal to his *kumpare* without betraying his principles, who drew the line between friendship and conscience, who was the closest to Erap as any man could be but who never used that power for personal gain, might have done so. I'd like to think that the movie hero who vanquished his enemies with the speed of his fists might have been the real-life president who vanquished his would-be friends with the strength of his beliefs.

I do know one thing with reasonable certainty, which is: just as Cory was the opposite of Marcos, or tried to be, FPJ would have tried to be the opposite of Gloria, and might have been.

GMA has brought out the worst in this country, FPJ might have brought out the best in it. Not the least by sheer example. I was truly astounded when I read some of the stories about his generosity after he died. Of course, death is a natural invitation to praise, to being turned from wolf to lamb, in this country more than in any other. But in FPJ's case, the praise seems heroically earned. Particularly since the only reason the stories were being told after his death was that he bound the witnesses to never talk about them. They only felt released from their vow by his death.

FPJ liked to give anonymously, which he thought was the true essence of giving. The story that still brings out a thrill in me was the cartons upon cartons of canned goods and clothes that he meant to give to the victims of the storms in Infanta last year, which were found in the same studio where he gasped his last. None of those cartons carried any label to identify their source. He gave the strictest orders on that. At a time when the highest officials take credit for all the good that happens to the country, including Pacquiao's victory, and put the blame on everyone for all the ills that happen to it, including Pacquiao's defeat, that comes out as a class act through and through.

That example might have inspired a nation to rise above itself. In lieu of us now agreeing that cheating is acceptable and crookedness par for the course, we might have contended that being good enough is not good enough, we can always be noble and heroic. In lieu of us now agreeing we deserve to be miserable as beggars cannot be choosers, we could have aspired to reach for things that lay beyond our grasp and asked "What else is heaven for?"

I do know one thing with infinitely more reasonable certainty. Which is that whether or not FPJ might have been these things or done these things, he deserved to have tried to. For one very good reason: He was the president of this country. He was voted president of this country. Not the one who said hello to Garci, not the one who was whisked off to Malacañang by Raul Gonzalez and Kiko Pangilinan saying "Noted," not the one who was furtively declared so in the dead of night while people slept.

The priest who said Mass last Tuesday night apparently said we owe FPJ. I do not know in what context he said it. I came in late, and heard that was the only political statement made that night. I personally think I do owe FPJ. I owe him an apology for doubting he could have become a good president.

And I owe him my loyalty for—even in death—being so.

Childish

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

THE SENATORS' THREAT TO CUT THE BUDGET for intelligence of the Armed Forces of the Philippines is childish. The AFP has rightly argued that cutting its intelligence budget would seriously imperil the security of the nation. Just because the senators are angry that the AFP cannot explain the alleged wiretapping does not give them the right to weaken the campaign against dissidents.

* * *

Senators are upset that a former AFP chief of staff and the current one don't seem to know who did the wiretapping. But since the activity was clearly illegal, why would the senators assume that those in the highest reaches of the AFP would condone it? And even assuming they knew about it, would they admit it, considering that it was patently illegal?

Even more ridiculous is the claim that the Palace ordered the wiretap. Why, to hang itself? I suspect that opposition figures who know the ins and outs of the intelligence network paid some Isafp people to secretly wiretap Garci so they could use it against GMA. For instance, T/Sgt. Vidal Doble, the prime suspect, admitted that Samuel Ong gave him P2 million in exchange for the tapes. Where did Ong get that money?

* * *

Earlier I quoted Sergio Ortiz-Luis, chair of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, as saying that the massive inflows of "hot money" in the form of foreign investments in stocks, real estate and debt papers are an indication of broad confidence in the administration. He said that while foreign direct investments (FDIs) are preferable to "hot money" which can be easily moved out of the country at the first sign of trouble, the good thing is that FDIs normally follow hot money, "akin to testing the waters." Reports indicate that FDIs from January to September this year amounted to $812 million, 69 percent more than last year's, though there was some contraction last September as a direct result of the instability caused by the impeachment complaint in the House of Representatives.

After the board meeting of Alay sa Kawal (ASK) Foundation, which I co-founded 20 years ago to help the families of soldiers killed or wounded in action, I queried a trustee, retired banker Val Araneta about the economy. He confirmed the tremendous interest in medium-range real estate registered principally by our OFWs. I earlier reported that former Sen. John Osmeña has gone into real estate development in Cebu and Negros Oriental. But Araneta also noted that retail spending this Christmas is down from last year, as even OFW families appear to be holding back on spending. A residue perhaps of the political instability.

* * *

For our dzRH program last Sunday, Cecile Alvarez and I invited once again Philippine SEA Games organizing committee (Philsoc) chair Obet Pagdanganan to do a post mortem. We had a big laugh recalling how nervous he was three weeks earlier, as Philsoc was still in the midst of campaigning for support and few knew how the Games would fare. But all's well that ends well. Pagdanganan noted that out of 440 gold medals, RP bagged 26 percent and the remainder was divided among six other countries. He paid tribute to the local governments and business corporations that gave all-out support. He noted how Marikina Mayor Marides Fernando spent P20 million to host the women's football event in the refurbished stadium there. He also mentioned that Globe Telecom added P100 million to the initial P300 million from the government for the Philsoc funds, apart from its support for the athletes' training.

Pagdanganan also said Philsoc's decision to hold the events in 38 venues in Luzon and the Visayas proved to a blessing in disguise, for the people in the various places got quite involved with the games and spurred our athletes to victory.

What made the SEA Games successful? For him, it was a combination of teamwork, focus, the support of business, the LGUs and the people, and peace and order (orchids to the PNP).

* * *

Last Friday, I witnessed the investiture of three friends of mine—Odelia Gregorio Arroyo, Alice Tesoro Guerrero and Josefina Padilla Rufino—as "Dames of Magistral Grace" in the Sovereign Military Order of Malta (SMOM). The candidates, dressed in long black gowns and cloaks, marched in a solemn processional to start off the elegant ceremony at Sanctuario de San Antonio in Forbes Park, witnessed by their families and knights and dames of the order. The solemn Mass was celebrated by Manila Archbishop Gaudencio B. Rosales, who is the "Grand Cross Conventual Chaplain ad honorem" of the order, while the liturgical investiture was officiated by Ernesto Rufino Jr., president of the Philippine association and representing the Prince and Grand Master, Fra' Andrew Bertie.

The solemn investiture ceremony offered a brief glimpse into the thousand-year history of this ancient lay religious order that traces its roots to the 11th century, before the First Crusade in the Holy Land. In ancient times, the Order of Malta's Christian soldiers and pilgrims fought battles to defend the faith against "infidels." Today SMOM's 11,000 members, spread out in over 120 countries, still pledge to defend the faith, but this time through "our service to the poor and for the poor." Instead of going into battle with swords, they combat human suffering caused by disease, poverty, injustice and war.

Ody Arroyo, speaking for the newly invested "dames," stressed the beginning of their "spiritual journey as they pledged to defend the Church and to care for our Lords, the sick and the poor with all our strength and dedication." SMOM's members here serve at Sabip Kabataan, at Mother Teresa's Home for the Poor, the Old and the Dying, and the courageous, cancer-stricken children at the Philippine General Hospital. In recent years, it has become involved in the battle against the scourge of AIDS here and in other parts of Asia. Surely, the chivalrous souls that dominated SMOM over the centuries would be proud of their Filipino kindred spirits.

The milkman of Talavera

HUMAN FACE

Ma. Ceres P. Doyo

GUYITO, THE INQUIRER'S CARABAO MASCOT, would be happy to know that his fellow ruminants have transformed the town of Talavera in Nueva Ecija into a land flowing with milk and milk products. Thanks to the dream and the daring of entrepreneur Danilo V. Fausto, carabao milk is now making a healthy comeback and finding a niche in the market.

Another thing to moo about is fresh milk from cows, produced by small farmers' cooperatives, is also finding its way into café society and boldly competing with imported milk that isn't fresh at all.

Fausto's "Dare to Dream: A Filipino Entrepreneur's Tale of Success in Dairy Farming" was launched last Monday at UP's Balay Kalinaw. Believers in the Philippine dairy industry were in attendance. It was a small but happy affair. National Dairy Authority chief Salvacion Bulatao gave a national situationer, while a nervous little farmer named Ka Henry, whom Fausto brought along, almost stole the thunder and received a standing ovation with his carabao success tale. But that is getting ahead of the story. People went home smiling and sporting white moustaches.

You might have seen in some malls the dainty DVF Dairy Farm's "Gatas ng Kalabaw" stalls that sell chilled fresh carabao milk in sealed bottles, plain or fruit- and pandan-flavored, as well as *pastillas de leche* and *kesong puti*. The *promdi* in you takes a second look, and you wonder if this is for real. Carabao's milk braving the mainstream?

That is exactly how Fausto's tale of success has gone so far. Fausto, a UP graduate who used to be in banking and finance, is now the president and CEO of DVF Dairy Farm Inc. He narrates how it all began:

"At the beginning, I was the laughingstock of farmers in Barangay Sampaloc and nearby barangays ....They thought I was crazy, throwing away money when I bought 10 carabaos. As a businessman based in Manila, raising carabaos was alien to me. But I thought that given enough time and technical help from knowledgeable persons, I would be able to pull it off.

"When I bought my first carabao stocks, rice harvest was one and a half months away. There was no available forage, so the carabaos' health deteriorated. The joke then was that my carabaos had piano ribs because they were so thin. After the rice harvest, rice straw became abundant. This gave me the opportunity to stock rice straw in traditional silos or *mandala*."

In no time, people stopped laughing, and farmers started asking if they could take care of some carabaos (Indian murrah) and participate in the venture. Things began to happen. Milking carabaos multiplied.

In 1992, the Talavera Dairy Cooperative Inc. was set up, and thus began the farmers' organized venture into dairy farming. It helped a lot that the Philippine Carabao Center in Muñoz was just nearby. (That's the home of the first test tube carabao and where Erap made his now famous "tubeless carabao" quip.)

Fausto figured that "with improved management, caracow breed and proper nutrition, carabaos can provide farmers with adequate income through milk production." He based this on the estimates of Central Luzon State University technicians. A farmer with three to four caracows could get 20 liters a day with one liter selling at P30. This means an added monthly income of P18,000 or P216,000 on a good year.

Such was the experience of Ka Henry, the farmer with the carabao tale mentioned earlier, who received two heads from the PCC dispersal program. In four years, Ka Henry was the owner of six carabaos. He was able to return the initial two heads, pay his debts, renovate his home, buy a tricycle and send a daughter to college. Today his carabaos' milk earns him an added P21,000 to P31,500 a month.

"I have always believed that in order for one to succeed in business, one has to get out of the box," says Fausto. "I told members of the cooperative that from the time they were born, they were already poor. Even their forefathers were poor farmers. So there was nothing wrong if we tried something different to increase the productivity of the soil and in so doing increase their income. We could improve the soil's productivity even without the use of modern technology by simply changing the product. So I convinced our members to plant Napier grass instead of rice." Napier grass is used as carabao feed.

Fausto draws the main bulk of DVF's dairy requirement from the farmers' dairy cooperatives. Cow's milk is now also being produced in large quantities. There are a variety of needs to meet and plan for—feeding programs for the poor, fresh milk for the table and coffee clubs, as well as the demand for gourmet cheese. Home delivery has started.

Fausto has even developed a scheme for absentee overseas Filipino workers (OFW) who might want to go into "passive investment" by partnering with farmers.

In his foreword, economist Dr. Sixto K. Roxas has glowing words for Fausto's groundbreaking work. "This is an inspiring tale of a venture undertaken for both profit and social purpose by a person who might well be... the archetype of a true development entrepreneur. Beyond merely undertaking a business, an entrepreneur is an innovator whose venture energizes a process of change and development in a nation's economy. He is the agent of change whose creative vision, skillful promotion, and bold risk-taking transform the whole production cycle in society, generating for the people new income streams and higher living standards."

Inspired and interested? Contact DVF Dairy Farm Inc. at 4157881 or dvfausto@pldtdsl.net.

* * *

Send feedback to cerespd@info.com.ph

Hearts and minds

THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III

THE PORTUGUESE DICTATOR ANTONIO DE Oliveira Salazar drew a commentary in the Times of London in 1961: "Who has not often felt the distaste with democratic politics which Salazar expressed when he said that he 'detested politics from the bottom of his heart; all those noisy and incoherent promises, the impossible demands, the hotchpotch of unfounded ideas and impractical plans... opportunism that cares neither for truth nor justice, the inglorious chase after unmerited fame, the unleashing of uncontrollable passions, the exploitation of the lowliest instincts, the distortion of facts... all that feverish and sterile fuss?'"

From the time of Alexander the Great, the impatience of the soldier with talk and more talk has entranced millions. The inability of elected leaders, the institutions they belong to, and the public (when it has the opportunity to select those leaders), to choose rational, responsible people to wield authority often leads to temptation to do away with those who govern, and isolate those who choose the ones who rule. "Line them up against the wall, and shoot them!" How often have we heard that? Far too often—and, perhaps, far more often now than at any time since the Marcos years.

Benito Mussolini wrote a summary of our government's—and really, any government's—policies in reaction to the increasingly threatening attitude of the more troublesome in the opposition (if not exactly the people). He began by posing a question: "Was there ever a government in history that was based exclusively on the consent of the people and renounced any and every use of force? A government so constituted there never was and never will be. Consent is as changeable as the formation of the sands on the seashore. We cannot have it always. Nor can it ever be total. No government has ever existed which made all its subjects happy. Whatever solutions you happen to give to any problem whatsoever, even though you share the divine wisdom, you would inevitably create a class of malcontents."

He went on to ask another question, and answered it by insisting on a harsh solution: "How are you going to avoid that this discontent spread and constitute a danger for the solidarity of the state? You avoid it with force—by employing force inexorably where it is rendered necessary. Rob any government of force and leave it only with its immortal principles, and that government will be at the mercy of the first group that is organized and intent on overthrowing it."

The danger, of course, is that the solidarity of the state (as Mussolini put it) or national security (as the government expresses it) depends on the armed forces. There is difficulty, though, in a divided armed forces, and there are enough crudely-written manifestos floating around to suggest that this may be so. The attitude of the soldier who would tear up the oath to the Constitution and the Republic was best exemplified in an interview Francisco Franco (future Generalissimo of Spain) gave during the Spanish Civil War. The Q&A went like this:

Q. How long, now that the coup has failed in your objectives, is the massacre to go on?

Q. What would your government do, if you won?

A. I would establish a military dictatorship.

Q. What would happen to the politicians of the republic?

A. Nothing, except they would have to go to work.

Q. Why were you able to collaborate with the government in apparent loyalty for so long?

A. I collaborated loyally as long as I thought the Republic represented the national will.

Q. What about the February elections? Don't they represent the national will?

A. Elections never do.

A struggle for the "hearts and minds" of our soldiers, by all accounts, has been going on for some time. It's no coincidence that Fr. Romeo Intengan, S.J. has published the outline for an essay on the armed forces, focusing, in particular, on the question Mussolini asked: How is the state to defend itself?

Intengan suggests: By knowing how seductive the enemy is, pointing, in particular, to the Communist Party of the Philippines. Its "Lt. Crispin Tagamolila Movement," he warns, is actively enlisting members of the AFP to the cause of revolution. Intengan views the repeal of the Anti-Subversion Law during the Ramos administration as a great error; and suggests that internal security has been neglected too long. While he recommends—as many sensible people have recommended—a reexamination of the National Defense Act because it is now outmoded in its concern with external aggression, one has to wonder if his concern with internal security is the answer. As far as protecting the state, it just might be; but it might be an effort along the lines of patching up a battleship just as the sailors are plotting mutiny.

The real concern is the one brought up by Intengan, but for reasons very different from what others may be considering. By this, I mean the obvious concern in Intengan's paper over the way our soldiers might be seduced and corrupted by communist thought; though laced as his paper is with Social Democratic thought, he is arguing over which brand of Socialism should be triumphant, and obviously he believes the CPP version ("Stalinist," he describes it bluntly) is wrong.

Which brings up the most pressing question of all. With some soldiers saying they have the answers, and too many Filipinos saying they want the soldiers to provide leadership, do we really know what our soldiers think? Or those claiming to think for them, have in mind? If the manifestos circulating are any guide, their thoughts can only fail to inspire. Those who would lead, must tell us more. To ask a people to take a leap of faith into the arms of those with bayonets is a dangerous proposition even in the worst of times.

Dreaming of stars

YOUNG BLOOD

Mario T. Juanillo

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

COUNTING STARS USED TO BE MY FAVORITE PASTIME. But that was when my vision was still 20/20. On clear, moonless nights, I'd spend hours sprawled on the corrugated roof of our house watching the stars traversing the skies. To me, this was a more pleasurable thing to do than watching "Okay Ka Fairy Ko" on our neighbor's black and white TV. Seeing stars—the real ones with hot, burning gases—allowed me to dream big dreams.

Identifying constellations and naming stars excited me as a 10-year-old. To my thinking then, knowing them set me apart from my less cerebral playmates. Whatever other value my knowledge of stars gave me, I did not understand. But being able to name constellations made me a star in my own right because others were impressed by my knowledge how however little.

Like any child who loves to dream, my goal was to be the first person to count the visible stars. Grade school astronomy was not teaching me enough about stars and I assumed that I would be able to count them all and give them names.

Ambitious? You bet. Until now, I haven't really figured out how many visible stars are there. But then again, being visible is relative.

My exposure to more advanced books made me understand that stars are innumerable. It also made me realize that being able to name one after whoever I like would not change the fact that the number of stars that remain unnamed is countless. Thus, such an attempt would not at all change the course of the universe.

When I was a little older, I learned that most of the stars already have names and that, for the sake of convention, we have to stick to international nomenclature or we would end up claiming things that are not ours. It took one failed exam in astronomy for me to understand that all the fuss and buzz about these astronomical names and figures are nothing more than a waste of time. People are bound to forget them when they grow older anyway.

I have grown so tired of counting stars that I stopped the exercise. My sight is not serving me well and I am beginning to appreciate only those things that I can look at up close. The last time I appreciated the beauty of stars was when I put on my contact lenses for the first time and chanced upon the clearest night I've experienced in the past 10 years. No fog, no scratches, no interference pattern, no hazy images—only stars in various colors and in their full brilliance. And my childhood dream was almost resurrected.

As my knowledge of astrophysics grew, my fixation with counting the stars and naming them waned. Now I can understand very well that every time I look at stars, I am looking at what has been. And since I am looking at the past, why make a big deal out of it? Who knows, Orion may already have lost its belt in its "true" present state (not the present of those stars as perceived by us but the present as it is happening now). Because light travels and the light emitted prior to the explosion of Orion's "belt" is yet to reach us, we still see them holding Orion's pants in our present. So, does knowing how many stars make up Orion matter? I say no.

I am not really over with stars yet. Although I don't have the same passion for them that I had more than 15 years ago, I still try to find time to look up the sky (even if my sight is limited to an arm's length) to be reminded that as long as there are stars, I should not stop dreaming.

I used to dream of being an astrophysicist. If I would become very brilliant in that field I'd skyrocket to full stardom, I thought. But I bade goodbye to that dream a long time ago when teaching welcomed me with open arms.

Now as a high school Physics teacher, I am dreaming that someday, someone from my class will outshine others and tell the world exactly how many stars are there. Maybe that will not be his exact point. Maybe, just maybe, that student will find the key to understanding why we are here in this world—looking at stars, dreaming about them, sometimes with our mouths open in awe. So when I teach, I always teach my students to dream and to love to dream. True, there are plenty of reasons to dream but nothing beats dreaming about a star.

I cannot help but mention how stars are treated in this country. And this time, I am talking about a different type of stars. What is it that their supporters go ridiculously gaga over stars? Until now I am wishing upon a star that I might become one someday. But then it's clear to me that I'll never amount to much as an astrophysicist. A shining star? Maybe. And then I can be among the first to be featured in the Filipino version of Hollywood's Walk of the Stars.

My boss dreamt of stars and she was rewarded with a planet. What could the stars possibly have in store for me?

Mario T. Juanillo, 25, is a Physics teacher at the Philippine Science High School Western Visayas Campus. He started teaching right after college and considers himself very lucky to have Josette T. Biyo, Ph.D. as his boss.

NOTICE TO YOUNGBLOOD CONTRIBUTORS:

Send your contributions by e-mail to youngblood@inquirer.com.ph together with your address, age and the school, course and year you're enrolled in or, if employed, the position you're holding and the company you work with. Contributions to Youngblood should not have been previously published.

THEY SAID

Good vs bad

"If the bad things that are being done around the world surpass the good things that people do, this world would have collapsed a long time ago."

—Archbishop Fernando Capalla, noting that despite the negativity in the world, the Church survives because of the presence of "holy people" who are beyond structural programs and problems

Way to prosperity

"Prosperity and growth come only to a business that systematically exploits its potentials and systematically optimizes its performances."

—SM Group CEO Teresita Sy

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Famous Filipino 'smile' stuns cruise ship guests

MY WIFE IS FROM MAKATI CITY. I enjoy reading INQ7.net as it gives me daily snapshots of Filipino culture, very similar to the way USA Today covers life here in America. While my wife enjoys herself in America, I can see she is much more excited when she goes visiting the Philippines.

However, my reason for writing this is an experience my wife and I had with some Filipinos aboard a cruise ship. From the moment we boarded the Costa Mediterranea, I could sense her excitement as she greeted Filipino after Filipino among the vessel's crew.

We had an absolutely fabulous time on board this cruise, and every single crew member from the Philippines just seemed to radiate the country's claim, "Where Asia wears a smile." There was, however, one Filipina aboard who impressed us with her marvelous strength of resolve and spirit.

A 22-year-old bar attendant from Manila, Arlene C. Pimentel has been working seven days a week, 16 hours a day on board Costa Mediterranea for eight months straight. She has little contact with her family due to the prohibitive cost of calling via satellite phone. While the tourists embarked and disembarked every seven days and scattered to the four winds, Arlene and her fellow countrymen labored on through a spartan regimen just to provide for their families back home. Arlene showed herself to be a warrior.

Arlene impressed us most for a gift that she shared with us on the night that the ship's crew performed for the guests. She was not an original member of the cast of performers, but when a crew member from Honduras quit and went back home, a substitute performer was needed. Arlene told her supervisor that she could sing if they needed her to.

Whatever shyness there was in Arlene vanished when she went on the stage and sang "Como puede ser verdad," the opening lyrics to Madonna's "La Isla Bonita." When she nailed the high notes to this song, she had put on an electric performance that none of the professional entertainers aboard the ship could have matched. The theme of the show was "World Showcase," but all of the passengers clearly realized this was a demonstration of Filipino talent. She and the entire Filipino cast were given a standing ovation, the only standing ovation given that entire week of performances. Filipinos had given notice: this was their ship and their show, and the night belonged to all of them.

It was not the beautiful voices and the stunning performances that amazed us all, but the enduring human spirit that Arlene and the cast displayed. To work hard every day and then deliver a performance that leaves the throng in complete awe. There is a bright future for Filipinos, Mabuhay! Many thanks to the Costa Mediterranea Filipino crew!

—J.R. JENSEN,
president and CEO,
Quomation Insurance Services Inc., www.quomation.com

Nothing new in unicameral

FR. JOAQUIN BERNAS, IN HIS column on amendments and revision to the Philippine Constitution (PDI, 12/05/05), clearly made his point. But would it have been helpful if he had pointed out some more of the advantages and disadvantages of the present bicameral setup and what could be done to improve it; this against the proposed unicameral setup, which does not seem to promise anything new under the sun?

I know he has done this wonderfully in a previous column, but could he cite some examples to make a stronger argument for keeping the present form of government, and guide ordinary Filipinos on what they could do in the middle of this tug-of-war?

—SUSAN TAN,
Illinois, USA,
SusanTan@aol.com

Capalla, a highly respected preacher and peace advocate

THIS IS IN REFERENCE TO CONrado de Quiros' column titled "Goodness gracious." (PDI, 11/23/05)

Evil forces are stronger than ever before, "for we are not fighting for flesh and blood but with the principalities in the spiritual realm." The shameful degradation of values, the moral and spiritual pillars of this nation and the whole wide world, is a direct evidence that we are under siege by evil forces. But there's comfort coming from Allah: "Where sin abound the grace of Allah much abound."

We are at war against those who are trying to bring down all sacred and holy things that Allah has instituted. Realizing this, different religious groups—Christians, Protestants, Muslims, etc.—in a renewal of fellowship, are linking arms and joining forces, to prevent a spiritual catastrophe and, by the mercy of Allah, save this nation from total reproach.

I am an eyewitness to this renewal that is breaking the walls and barriers of religious discrimination, while building bridges of love and unity.

It is for this reason that I am expressing my outrage over a recent column of De Quiros. As a follower of Allah and in the spirit of ecumenism, I felt pain when De Quiros described Archbishop Fernando Capalla as "deeply religious, deeply crooked."

Archbishop Capalla is a dear friend. I personally know him as a peace advocate and a preacher of righteousness. He is a close ally in our call for a renewal in the hearts of men, and for this nation to live peaceably. He is a highly respected co-convenor and chair of the Bishops Ulama Conference. He is also the chair of the Bishops Ulama Priests Pastors Farmers Lumad Conference. We, the Muslim communities, highly respect the archbishop in the same way that we respect other religious leaders.

On behalf of the Ulama League of the Philippines, I appeal to the INQUIRER to avoid mentioning names in such articles in the future. The pain that is felt by a part pains the whole.

—ALLEM MAHMOD MALA L. ADILAO,
regional chair
for Southern Mindano,
Ulama League of the Philippines,
179 Mini Forest, Salmonan,
Quezon Boulevard, Davao City

Rise and shine as a beacon of freedom

CONGRATULATIONS AND BEST wishes to the INQUIRER on the occasion of its 20th anniversary last Dec. 9. Truly the rebirth of democracy in our beloved country two decades ago heralded the rebirth of press freedom. I admire the INQUIRER's steely resolve to give its readers balanced news and fearless views.

I hailed the INQUIRER for standing up against President Estrada in the summer of 1999, (I was on vacation in the Philippines) when he called for an advertising boycott against the newspaper in a failed effort to bring it to its knees, for "refusing to pander to the purely popular." In the end it was Estrada who was brought down with a loud bang owing to the weight of his own misdeeds.

But we better watch out. This bombings in Manila and strafing of a building owned by the Arroyo family (where no one was hurt) remind us of the stage-managed 1972 ambush of Juan Ponce Enrile, who was then the defense secretary. The writings are on the wall, and the much-talked about reimposition of martial law by Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo could easily become a reality. There is the likelihood that Virgilio Garcillano will spill the beans. When the going gets rougher for GMA, she might just do a Marcos act.

There is no limit to what this woman will do to stay in power. But let this not dampen anyone's Christmas, much less the INQUIRER's. For the INQUIRER, martial law in the offing should serve as a challenge and a source of encouragement and strength for the daily to continue to rise and shine as a beacon of freedom.

—RAMON MAYUGA,
GeRMayuga@aol.com

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Weaning of power co-ops from NEA long overdue

FOR ALMOST EIGHT YEARS now, the National Association of Electricity Consumers for Reforms (Nasecore) has remained steadfast in its efforts to have electric cooperatives (ECs) registered with the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA), so that consumer ownership may be finally and formally recognized in the book of accounts of the 114 ECs. These ECs are still under the supervision and control of the National Electrification Administration (NEA) by virtue of Presidential Decree 1645.

Our advocacy started in late 1996 when the Rotary Club of Tacloban, of which I was a member, undertook as part of its Community Service Program to find out the reasons for the daily brownouts and high cost of power of the Leyte II Electric Cooperative Inc. It was here that I got hold of a copy of the 1990 Cooperative Code of the Philippines (RA 6938). The Code provides: "Electric cooperatives shall be covered by this Code." This means that the ECs' registration with the CDA is mandatory.

But because of the NEA's widely known resolve to keep the ECs under its supervision and control, as can be gleaned from its propaganda and position papers, it saw to it that the Omnibus Rules and Regulations for the Registration of Electric Cooperatives (ORREC), which sadly came out six years after the passage of the Code, would make it impossible for any EC to be so registered. The NEA thus introduced a referendum where consumers were asked to answer yes or no to this question: "Are you in favor of converting the electric co-op from non-stock, non-profit into a stock and profit-oriented cooperative?" This was strengthened by the quorum provision on a two-thirds majority vote of 25 percent of the total EC membership. Out of the 114 ECs, only 28 called for such referendum and only one was able to gather a quorum. None was not able to convert.

What is the relevance of conversion in the mandate of registration with the CDA? None. That is only a way for the NEA to hijack the mandate on the registration of the ECs with the CDA.

The implementing rules and regulations of the Electric Power Industry Reform Act (Epira) have this referendum provision again. In Section 57, the ECs are given two options: to convert either into stock cooperatives or into stock corporation. Interestingly, the Guidelines for the Conduct of the Referendum as amended was finalized only on Oct. 25, 2005 by the NEA when the deadline was December 2002.

In June 2002, the NEA passed Resolution No. 065 mandating the ECs to implement patronage credits which should have recorded the monthly capital contributions of the member-consumers (determined on the basis of their patronage). But to date, not a single coop under the NEA has implemented this patronage credits, which makes suspect that resolution.

—PETE L. ILAGAN,
president,
National Association of Electricity Consumers for Reforms,
10 Bayside Court Compound,
680 Quirino Ave.,
Tambo, Parañaque City

One hell of a great woman

I ALWAYS ADMIRE SOLITA MONsod's intellect, candidness, humor, independent mind and obvious care for the country and people, which I can read in her unbiased and objective opinions and commentaries. I absolutely agree with her, 1,000 percent, that President Macapagal-Arroyo, with or without cheating, won and defeated the late Fernando Poe Jr. by a slim margin.

Just like Monsod, I abhor cheating in any form. But I also personally believe that we, as a nation, must set aside all our political beliefs and even our own personal convictions for the sake of progress and peace—to avoid disunity. I don't see the point of those who maligned her for writing what was factual and true regarding Ms Arroyo's victory in the last elections. Monsod's view on that matter was not subjective and, obviously, not based on her own personal, biased opinion, but on scientific data.

Monsod did the right thing in presenting the truth. Ms Arroyo won—with or without cheating. She is the President of the Republic and the head of the government, period. If those who want her out truly love our country and want a peaceful and progressive republic, they must set aside their animosity toward the President and, instead, help the government in any way they can to achieve peace and progress.

Monsod is one hell of a great woman, and I will never stop admiring her. I will always pray for her good health and long, active, happy and fruitful life with her equally great better half. If and when I visit Manila in the future, I would surely look for Solita Monsod. I would be thrilled to have dinner with a great woman like her. The dinner would be on me.

—E. PANCHANG M. LIMCAUCO,
La Verne, California, USA

What SEA Games crown proved

I AM A FILIPINO CITIZEN, CURrently working in Nigeria. I also followed the results of the 2005 Southeast Asian Games which was held in our country through the INQ7.net day-to-day updates.

I am very proud of our Filipino athletes' winning the SEA Games overall championship for the first time. Let me extend my warmest congratulations to all of them. *Mabuhay kayong lahat at maraming salamat!*

Their achievement goes to show that Filipinos, when united and eager to achieve, can do the impossible. We hope this serves as a reminder—not only for our sports officials but, most especially, for our political leaders—that unless we are united, nothing will be accomplished. Thank you and God Bless!

—RAINIER ZERNA,
Victoria Island, Lagos, Nigeria,

E-mail: pr_provincial_news@inquirer.com.ph

INQUIRER Southern Luzon

Editor Jun Bandayrel
Bureau Chief Floreño G. Solmirano

A tale of 2 parish church performers

By Romulo O. Ponte
Victoria, Laguna

AT 10, HE LOST HIS SIGHT AFTER SUFFERING from typhoid fever. He was forced to stop schooling at Grade 3.

Despite the disability, Jaime "James" Dizon dela Cruz grew up and learned to socialize like any other normal person. Moreover, he can play the guitar well.

Friends persuaded James to use his musical talent and perform at the La Resurreccion Parish Church in Victoria town in Laguna. Now, at 49, he is the church's guitarist, organist and singer, presenting a repertoire of Filipino and English hit songs and classical pieces during the daily regular, funeral and wedding Masses.

He is also all over town, singing in funeral wakes from evening till dawn and earning a few pesos for his services.

James' favorite numbers: "As Your Wedding" and "Diyos ay Pag-ibig (God is Love)" for a wedding Mass; "Mahiwaga ang Buhay ng Tao" and "Hindi Kita Malilimutan" for a funeral Mass; "Doon Lang," "Ang Tao'y Marupok," "Harana" and many other songs for any other occasion.

Marriage proposal

When he sang and played the love song "Lupa Man ay Langit na Rin," a woman accepted his marriage proposal, he claimed.

In May 1998, he lost his left forefinger in a freak accident. He was accompanying children inside the church during the Flores de Mayo offering to the Blessed Mother before the Mass when they naughtily turned on the huge industrial fan directly at the seated James.

He pulled away the fan but was shocked and nearly fainted in disbelief when he found that his finger was gone.

An altar boy brought him to a clinic.

James said he had thought that it was the end of the world, that he would no longer play the guitar, and that he would find it difficult to play the electric organ.

Priestly advice

Although his wound had healed, he was too ashamed to report back to the church, James said. He used to stay in the parish convent and go home only on weekends as his wife Susan was working in Biñan town.

He started packing up for his trip home, believing that playing his favorite musical instruments was now hopeless.

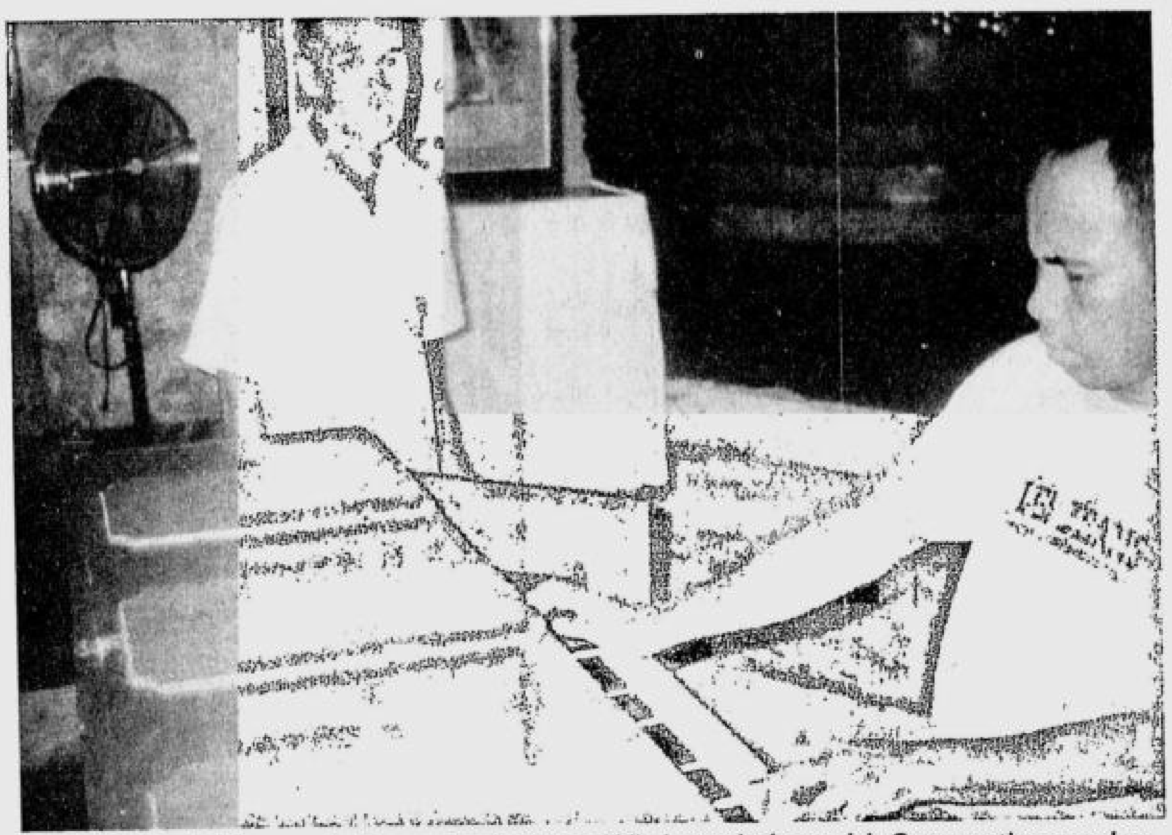
But the parish priest would not give up. He prodded James to continue playing and assured him that everything would turn out all right.

Gradually, James practiced playing the organ with his remaining fingers—and succeeded. With the priest's encouraging words, hope surged anew and James relearned to play the guitar without his forefinger after several months.

But then, funeral parlor owners have found a new mode of entertaining people attending wakes. They started to install videoke equipment and invite club singers or local talents to perform.

James said he did not mind losing his extra job because his parish priest regularly brought him to Masses in chapels in the villages, aside from Masses in the main church.

The priest gives him additional fees and goods for him to take home.



SINGER Deboy Dikitanan, who has cerebral palsy, and blind organist James dela Cruz practice a number at the La Resurreccion Parish Church in Victoria town in Laguna. ROMULO O. PONTE

Cerebral palsy victim

David "Deboy" Palconan Dikitanan, 46, also of Victoria town, is a cerebral palsy victim. His hands and feet are stiff. He stutters and his head jerks involuntarily.

Cerebral palsy has been defined as a "disability resulting from damage to the brain before or during birth and outwardly manifested by muscular incoordination and speech disturbances."

But Deboy chose not to become a prisoner of his handicap. He unabashedly sings hit pieces with or without the accompaniment of his favorite guitarist-organist, James dela Cruz, and without much prodding.

His favorites: "Ibig Kong Magtapat," "Pag-ibig ay Nakatali Na," "Kapantay ay Langit," "Kapalaran," "Bato sa Buhangin," "Balatkayo" and "Diyos ay Pag-ibig." For a solo at a funeral Mass, he renders, "Hesus, Hinging Patawad."

When he performs before small gatherings of parishioners, friends in drinking sessions and other informal gatherings, his hands are twisted and his body moves involuntarily.

Chess wizard

Deboy started singing in the church in 1975 during the time of his late parish priest, Senen Encarnacion, and assistant parish priest, Marvi Villamir. He said James started working in the church several years ahead of him.

Despite his looks and physical features, Deboy, for those who know him well, is a man not only gifted with a talent to sing but with intelligence and reasoning prowess.

He is a chess wizard. He was overall champion of a chess tournament during Victoria's golden anniversary celebration a few years back.

EENT specialist Dr. Jeffrey Corcuera said Deboy was one of the intelligent students of their class at the St. Francis High School. Corcuera was salutatorian while Dikitanan was sixth. Deboy said he excelled in oral recitations.

Deboy was third honor when he graduated at the Nanhaya Elementary School. He transferred to the San Francisco Barangay National High School, also in Victoria, for economic reasons, and graduated ninth in the class.

Second cousins

The singer is the eldest of 13 children of fisherman Pilino Dikitanan, 62, and Francisca Palconan, 61. Three of his siblings have died.

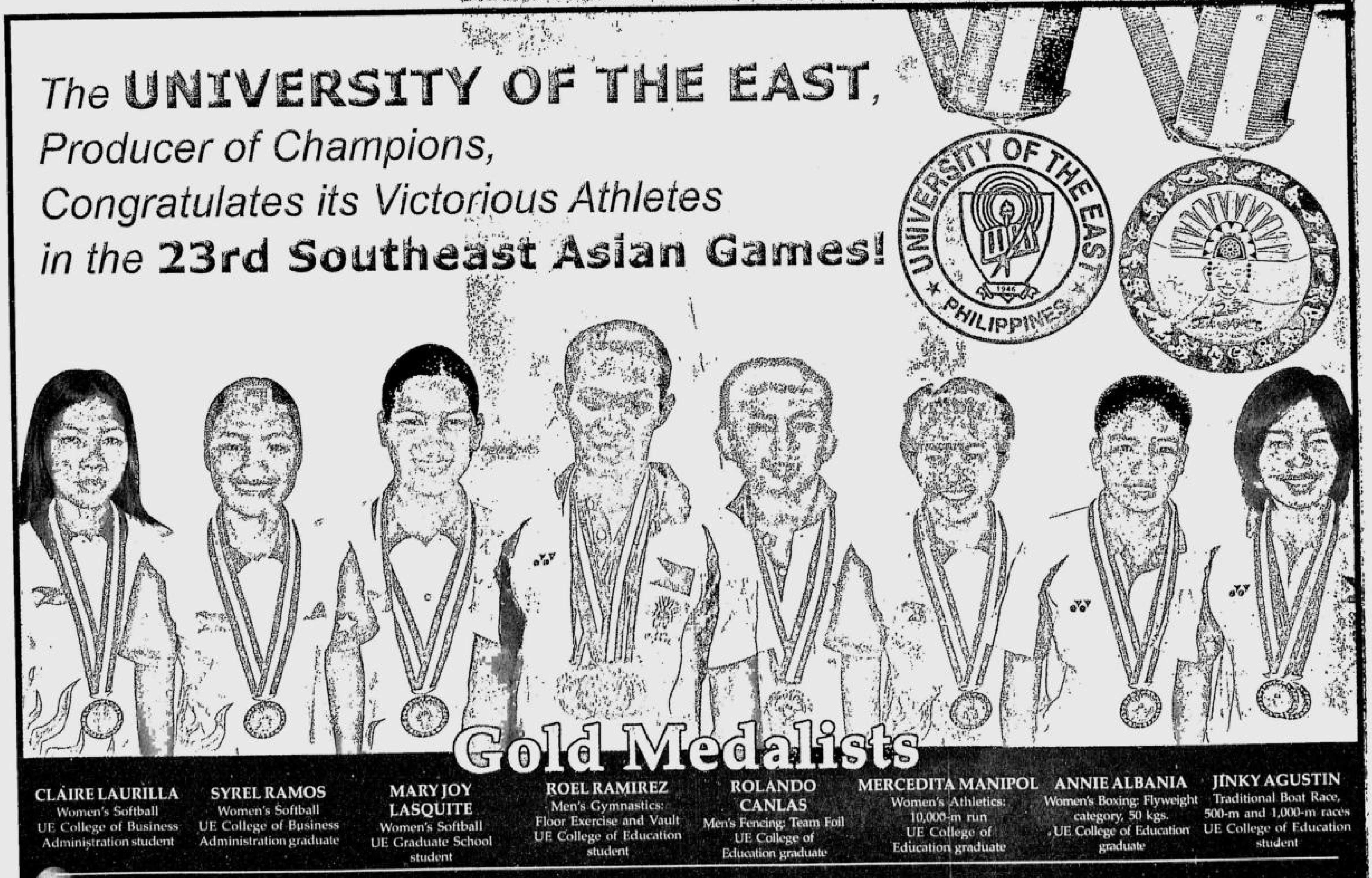
A sister and a brother are special children. They have been invalid since birth.

Deboy attributed the physical infirmities among the members of his family to hormonal deficiencies due to the marriage of his parents, who are second cousins.

Because the family was poor, only Alexander, 37, has finished several vocational courses, such as diesel automotive mechanics, electrical and radio electronics.

Deboy's other siblings are all high school graduates.

Today, Deboy frequents the church in Pangil town. He said he is comfortable singing with James, who has been providing him organ accompaniment for a long time.



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ROEL RAMIREZ
Men's Gymnastics: Floor Exercise and Vault
UE College of Education student

ROLANDO CANLAS
Men's Fencing: Team Foil
UE College of Education graduate

MERCEDITA MANIPOL
Women's Athletics: 10,000-m run
UE College of Education graduate

ANNIE ALBANIA
Women's Boxing: Flyweight category, 50 kgs.
UE College of Education graduate

JINKY AGUSTIN
Traditional Boat Race, 500-m and 1,000-m races
UE College of Education student

Silver Medalists > **Mercedita Manipol**, Women's Athletics: 5,000-m run • **Grandmaster Nelson Mariano II**, Men's Chess: Rapid Chess Team Competition • **Edmund Velez**, Men's Fencing: Saber • **Roel Ramirez**, Men's Gymnastics: High Bar • **Aices Salvador**, Women's Chess, Junior Level

Bronze Medalists > **Mary Grace Melgar**, Women's Athletics: 400-m hurdles • **Loralie Amahit**, Women's Athletics: Hammer Throw • **Brydon Sy**, Men's Gymnastics: Parallel Bar and Team Events • **Al Ramirez, Ronnie Ramirez** and **Roel Ramirez**, Men's Gymnastics: Team Events • **Ana Lisa Cruz**, Women's Boxing: Light Flyweight/48 kgs.

4th Place > **Ester Cabasura**, Women's Weightlifting: 69 kg. • **Jhoan Banayag**, Women's Athletics: 42k Marathon • **Elma Muros-Posadas, Mary Grace Melgar** and **Meriam Fortunato**, Women's Athletics: 4 x 100-m relay

Other Participating Athletes > **Sherryl Contillo**, Women's Gymnastics • **Jeffrey Figueroa**, Men's Taekwondo • **Roselle Espinas** and **Julie Rose Forbes**, Women's Track and Field • **Alvin Valeroso**, Men's Football

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UE's Testimonial Dinner for its athletes will be held today, 7 p.m. at the Kachina Room, Century Park Hotel.

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1st RP eagle owl bred in captivity

By Carla P. Gomez
PDI Visayas Bureau

BACOLOD CITY—A FIRST IN Philippine wildlife conservation efforts has been achieved in Negros Occidental with the birth of "Bubo."

The Negros Forests and Ecological Foundation Inc. (NFEFI) yesterday announced that it has successfully bred in captivity a threatened and endangered Philippine Eagle Owl.

This is the first time that a Philippine-Eagle Owl, whose scientific name is *Bubo philippensis*, has been hatched in captivity, said Gerry Ledesma, NFEFI chair.

Nicknamed "Bubo," the owlet is the offspring of Suplada and Hinahon. He was hatched on Nov. 21.

Ledesma said the owlet's name was just temporary. He said a contest to name the owlet would be held in January among children visiting the NFEFI zoo along South Capitol Road, in the heart of Bacolod City.

Bubo's sex is not determined yet until the owlet is fully feathered, he said.

The Philippine Eagle Owl, known as "kuwago" or "bukao," is endemic to the Philippines and is in the critically endangered list, Ledesma said.

As part of its captive breeding program, NFEFI's Biodiversity Conservation Center, acquired three female and three male Eagle Owls from the Avilon Zoological Park in Rizal through the Philippine Owls Conservation Program, NFEFI trustee Robert Harland said.

Only two pairs have successfully mated, and had several unfruitful attempts at breeding earlier this year, he said. It was only on Oct. 13 that an egg from Suplada was discovered, which she successfully incubated and hatched on Nov. 21, he said.

"The first week of the owlet's life was crucial especially as this was the first time the parents have reared a chick," said Dr. Leo Suarez, BCC curator.

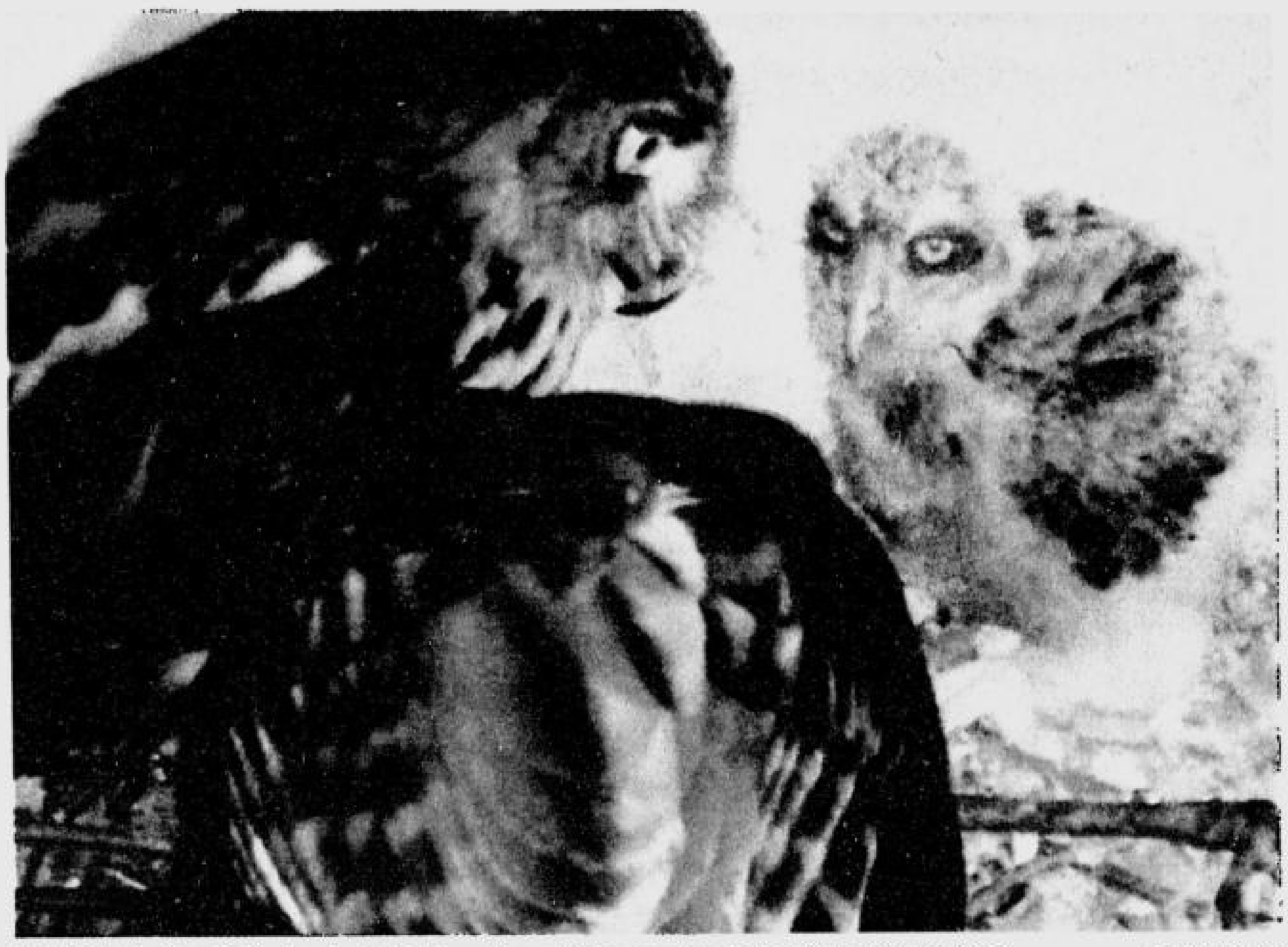
"We are closely monitoring the owlet and we're delighted to report it seems healthy and growing fast," he said.

Little is known about the breeding biology of the Philippine Eagle Owl so Suarez said he and his team are collecting as much data as possible to have a better understanding of the species.

"We are thrilled with the arrival of the owlet. We congratulate Dr. Leo Suarez and his team on being the first to breed this threatened species in captivity. Their hard work and patience have paid off," Ledesma said.

The Philippine Eagle Owl, the largest species of owl in the country, has a small, severely fragmented population that is undergoing a rapid decline as a result of extensive lowland deforestation, he said.

It has lengthened feathers above and behind the eye known as "horns" and "ear tufts." Its conservation status is that of "vulnerable," an internationally and nationally protected species whose trade is prohibited, Ledesma said.



"BUBO," the first Philippine Eagle Owl bred in captivity, rests in a nest as its mother looks on. ROBERT HARLAND

2 die as rains bring floods to Palawan

CAMP VICENTE LIM, LAGUNA—A 42-year-old woman and her son drowned as torrential rains in the past four days submerged three towns of Palawan, the Regional Disaster Coordinating Council (RDCC) said on Wednesday.

The heavy rains also submerged at least three towns in the northern part of the province.

Armando Duque, RDCC regional director, identified the fatalities as Marissa Basan and her son Jason, residents of Barangay Sta. Marian, Dumaran town.

Duque said the two were swept away by strong water current after monsoon rains on Sunday night caused two main bridges in Barangay Sta. Maria to collapse on Monday morning.

He said the bodies of the victims were recovered on Tuesday afternoon.

He, however, said floodwater started to recede on Tuesday night.

Duque said floodwaters practically isolated several barangays in the towns of Aborlan, Dumaran and Taytay.

He said at least 5,000 people were moved to several evacuation centers in these municipalities.

In Taytay town, 345 families were transported to higher grounds as waist-deep floodwaters submerged four villages.

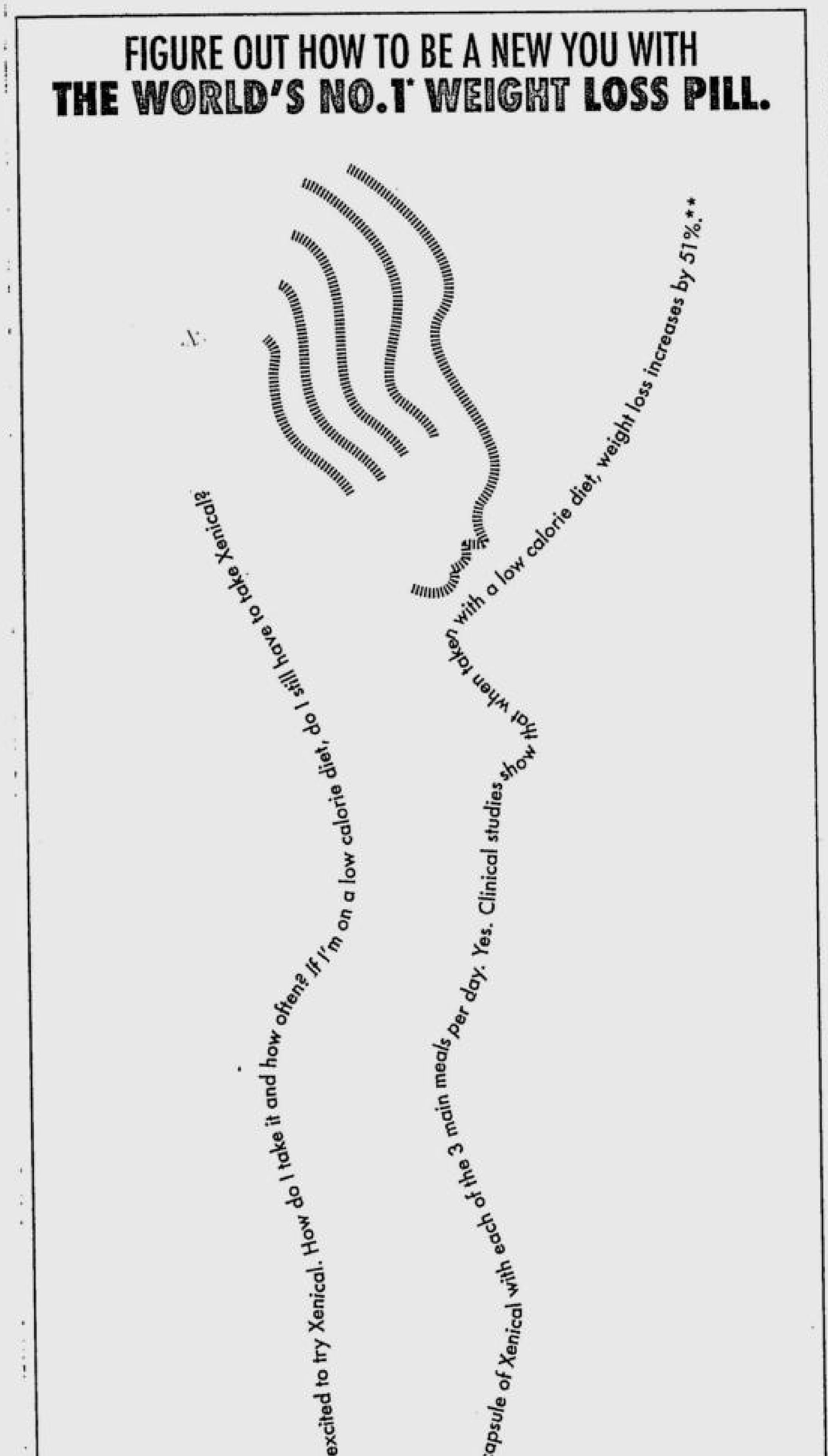
At least 272 families in six villages in Aborlan were also evacuated while in Dumaran, 250 families were affected by floods in five lowland villages.

Duque said main roads had been closed to motorists in some parts of Taytay during the height of flooding.

He said the local government units of the affected towns had already started distributing relief goods.

He added that they had sent a team of RDCC personnel to assess the actual extent of damage of the rains in Palawan.

Earlier, Calapan City and several towns in Quezon province were isolated by flooding brought by monsoon rains. *Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*



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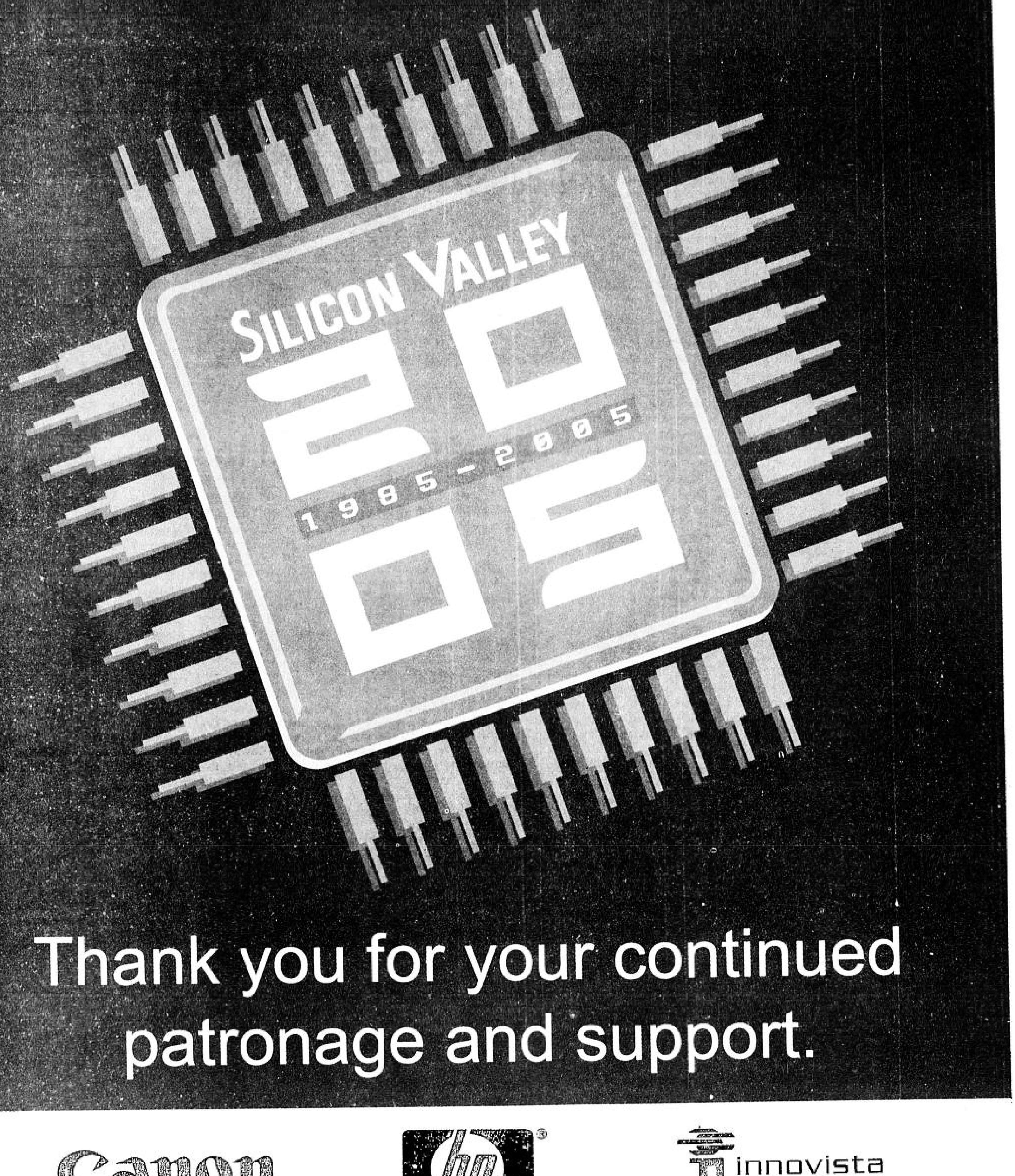

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Military, NPA told to keep off Mt. Banahaw

LUCENA CITY—THOUSANDS OF residents, religious group representatives, government officials and non-government organization members declared Mt. Banahaw a zone of peace, calling on government forces and communist guerrillas to bring their fighting elsewhere.

The peace zone advocates, led by the "Kapatirang Alay sa Kaunlaran ng Bayan" (Kaakbay-Quezon), called on the New People's Army rebels and the government forces to respect their declaration of the mystical mountain as a "Zone of Ecological and Human Peace."

"We want to build a place where peace lives in the hearts of all stakeholders and visitors alike, where everyone will treat each other with mutual respect and share his resources for furthering peace and cooperation," Estacio Lim Jr., Kaakbay-Quezon spokesperson, said.

In the statement, the peace zone advocates declared that they want a zone of peace that is not merely a "demilitarized zone" but also a common sanctuary for all those who abhor violence, injustice and environmental degradation.

The mobilization and caravan, dubbed as "pilgrimage for peace," started at the Church plaza in Lucban town at the foot of Mt. Banahaw yesterday morning.

From Lucban, the mobile caravan—composed of several vehicles—snaked through the towns of Tayabas, Sariaya, Candelaria, Tiaong and wound up in Dolores, which served as the gate leading to the mountain.

After the program in Dolores, several white doves were released to signify the common aspiration for peace of the communities surrounding Mt. Banahaw.

The short program in every pit stop in each town's Church plaza was capped with an ecumenical prayer from Catholic, Protestant, Muslim and born-again Christian groups and a candle-lighting ceremony signifying the call for peace.

Each town's aspiration for peace was echoed by a message from a child speaker. No other speakers were allowed at every pit stop.

Two weeks ago, government forces and NPA rebels were engaged in 10 days of gun battles in several Mt. Banahaw mountain villages, forcing some 8,000 residents to evacuate.

Lt. Gen. Pedro Cabuay Jr., head of the military's Southern Luzon Command, assured the peace advocates that government forces would not be the cause of the fighting, "not only in Mt. Banahaw but anywhere else."

He pointed to the NPA as the one who transgressed and disturbed the peace of the mountain villagers.

"When we were running after these terrorists, what they did was to hide behind innocent civilians," Cabuay said.

"They used civilians as shields ...," the Solcom chief said.

Communist spokesperson Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal, blamed government forces.

"The military and the police are the No. 1 violators of human rights," he said.

"They should address their call for peace to national government officials," he said in a mobile phone interview. *Delfin Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

CHRISTMAS & A HAPPY
YEAR

DAVAO LIGHTS
The Davao City Hall is all dressed up for the holidays, bursting in colored lights.

BING GONZALES/PDI MINDANAO BUREAU

LGUs get until yearend to fix garbage systems

LEGAZPI CITY—LOCAL GOVERNMENT units have only until the end of this year to comply with the Solid Waste Management Act of 2000 (SWM) or face stiff penalties.

The warning was aired by the Environmental Management Bureau of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources as it intensified monitoring of non-complying LGUs nationwide.

Engineer Beth Fruto, SWM coordinator for Bicol, said LGUs have only until the end of this month to phase out their open or controlled dumps and pave the way for the operation of sanitary landfills as mandated by the law.

LGUs who fail to comply will be slapped with a P500,000 penalty and a citizen's suit will be filed against them, Fruto said.

As of the latest report, at least 80 local government units that have undergone evaluation by the DENR-EMB have been recommended to the National Solid Waste Management Council for the filing of a citizen's suit.

Among those listed are Obando, Meycauayan, Marilao, Hagonoy, Calumpit, Baliwag in Bulacan; Angeles City, San Fernando City, Mabalacat, Floridablanca, Apalit, in Pampanga; Muñoz City and Cabanatuan City in Nueva Ecija.

Labo, Capalonga, Paracale, Jose Panganiban, Vinzons and Daet in Camarines Norte; Oas, Tiwi, Rapu-Rapu, Pioduran, Polangui, Bacacay and Camalig in Albay; Palanas, Mandaon, Dimasalang, Baleno, Mobo, Milagros, Pio V. Corpuz, San Jacinto and Uson in Masbate; Donsol, Castilla, Sta. Magdalena, Prieto Diaz, Matnog, Magallanes, Juban, Bulan and Casiguran in Sorsogon; Pili, Caramoran, Tinambac, Goa, Calabanga, Nabua, Garchitorena, Libmanan, Ocampo and Ragay in Camarines Sur; Pandan, Gigmoto, Baras and Caramoan in Catanduanes.

Cadiz City, Leganes, Bacolod City, Bago City, Iloilo City, Victorias City, Valladolid, Talisay City, Silay City, Sagay City, Himamaylan, La Carlota and Kabankalan City.

Lapu-Lapu City, in Cebu; and Pasay City, Navotas, Taguig City, Manila, Malabon and Pateros in Metro Manila.

Fruto said other LGUs that are not listed will also be eventually included.

"It's either they have yet to undergo inspection or they are under evaluation," she said. *Bobby Labalan, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

MILF says Army statements hurting peace process

COTABATO CITY—THE MORO ISLAMIC Liberation Front (MILF) yesterday countered the military's warning of a renewed war unless the rebel group stops its alleged recruitment of new members.

Southern Command chief Lt. Gen. Edilberto Adan said the recent activities of the MILF "are acts that are in preparation for war."

Adan said the MILF has recruited 4,000 new members, who underwent military training, including the manufacture of improvised bombs and indoctrination on the conduct of suicide mission.

The military's claim was officially rejected by the government peace panel dealing with the MILF.

Ghadzali Jaafar, MILF political affairs chief, also said the "misinformation was meant to stall the peace process."

He said that any military offensive against MILF fighters would certainly derail the peace talks and undermine the improving relations between both parties.

"If the military attacked a partner, that partnership is bound to end," Jaafar warned.

The government and the MILF have been negotiating for an end to the Moro insurgency.

During several rounds of talks, a number of agreements had been reached including one that prescribed a ceasefire and a joint effort against terrorism.

"Over a long period of time now, we have shown our sincerity by holding on to the ceasefire agreement and by helping the government solve a number of kidnap cases in Central Mindanao. Now, its time for the government to show proof of its commitment to peace," said Jaafar.

Eid Kabalu, MILF spokesperson, said they were hoping that a final peace agreement is reached soon.

Defense Secretary Avelino Cruz said the government is also hoping that a peace agreement could be signed next year.

Malaysia has been hosting the peace talks with the MILF.

"If a final agreement would be arrived at next year, then it would be good," Kabalu said.

But he said even if disagreements over some issues prevent the signing of a peace deal, the MILF "will continue to talk until a comprehensive solution to the Bangsamoro problem is reached."

"Negotiations are still the best option ...," Kabalu said. *Charlie Señase, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

ROUNDUP

Shariff Kabungsuan Fest

ITO ANG PINAKABONGGANG SELEBRASYON!

COTABATO CITY—This city will have the "grandest and the most colorful celebration in central Mindanao and in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao" starting today, according to City Tourism Council chair Bai Sandra Sinsuat Ampatuan Sema. The Shariff Kabungsuan festival that will last until Dec. 19, depicts the spread of Islam in Mindanao through Shariff Kabungsuan, an Arab missionary who landed at the mouth of Rio Grande de Mindanao—the second longest river in the country—during the 11th century. Trade fairs, battle of the bands, business fora, cultural presentations, street dancing competitions and Kanduli (thanksgiving banquet) are among this year's events.

Army exec slain

COTABATO CITY—An Army intelligence officer, who was a 1998 graduate of the Philippine Military Academy, was shot dead along with his military buddy in Cagayan de Oro City at about 1:30 p.m. on Dec. 11. Lawyer Silvino Cinches, National Bureau of Investigation director for Central Mindanao, said 1st Lt. Sadat Hofer Tamano and an unidentified soldier companion suffered multiple bullet wounds believed to have come from assault rifles. The 29-year-old officer is the son of former Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao Education Secretary Saripada Tamano. Cinches said the victim was scheduled to join his father to welcome the arrival of his mother, Marlyn, from Manila when gunned down by unidentified men at the mall's parking lot. *Charlie Señase, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Ex-soldier held

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—Police in Central Mindanao arrested on Monday a former Army soldier tagged in the 1997 killing of a mayoral candidate in Binalonan, Pangasinan. Supt. Willie Dangane, intelligence chief of the Central Mindanao police, said Jaime Fajardo served as bodyguard for a Binalonan politician. Dangane said after having been implicated in the killing of the politician's rival, Fajardo went into hiding in Barangay San Pablo in Tacurong City, Sultan Kudarat. "I was just implicated in the killing. I am innocent of the charges hurled against me," Fajardo said. *Aquiles Zonio, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Pentagon man nabbed

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—Police have arrested a member of the Pentagon Gang during an operation in Lambayong, Sultan Kudarat. Saydona Kamlon, alias Sultan, who was wounded when he tried to evade arrest on Nov. 18, was recently presented to the media. Supt. Willie Dangane, chief of the Regional Special Operations Group (RSOG) of the Central Mindanao Police Command, said Kamlon was under commander TMX. Kamlon, Dangane said, confirmed military reports that Pentagon leader Alonto Tahir split his group into several factions to make the manhunt difficult for the military. But, Alonto, he said, was still in command of the entire gang. The military claimed that Alonto was killed during one of its aerial bombings in the Liguasan marsh but Kamlon said the bandit leader is alive. *Aquiles Zonio, PDI M. Bureau*

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Palace sees sinister forces, shadowy figures

From page A1

before Ms Arroyo and her party left for Manila after attending the 11th Asean summit.

Bunye admitted that Ms Arroyo had been in touch with her officials, especially Gonzalez, on the developments in Manila.

"[But] I don't think there are serious apprehensions on the part of the President," Bunye said. "[She] is clearly focused on what more needs to be done as far as the economy is concerned."

Bunye said the Palace appreciated Abat's concern but found his self-proclamation as president "pathetic and unfortunate."

"I say it's unfortunate because it comes at a time when he is in the last stages of what could otherwise have been a very brilliant and colorful career," Bunye said.

Former President Fidel Ramos, under whom Abat served as defense secretary, dismissed the latter's actions as "just antics."

Speaking at a press conference held at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport shortly after arriving from Kuala Lumpur at around 4 p.m. yesterday, Ramos expressed doubt that Abat's "government" would succeed.

"My assessment of that one is they have very, very minimal chances of success, if at all," said Ramos, who attended the Eminent Persons Group that met on the sidelines of the Asean summit.

He said that as history had shown, Filipinos rejected "bloody shortcuts" and shoddy attempts at a government takeover.

He also said the people were aware that they would be the ultimate victims in a "political crossfire and economic fallout."

Ramos said that like the many protest actions held against the administration, the "transition government" appeared to be receiving "funding somewhere."

Last month, Ramos rejected the invitation of Abat to join the launch of the so-called Second Malolos Congress, the precursor to the "transition government."

"Why should I join a cause that I have already evaluated to most likely fail?" Ramos said.

Quandary

The government, which has been tolerant of Abat's actions in the last few years, is in a quandary on how to handle him.

Gonzalez said Malacañang could not dismiss Abat's actions as "acts of pranksters or second boyhood."

"You might allow the situation to [worsen] in the sense that it will excite people to consider that there are several groups of different ideologies and persuasions that have reached a common agenda to bring down the presidency," he said.

Gonzalez refused to name those whom Malacañang suspected to be behind Abat, saying to do so would "compromise certain things."

But Gonzalez was quick to exonerate Ramos: "He is only guilty by association. We have no reason to believe the gossip that he is behind Abat."

Ermita, however, said it would not be far-fetched to consider leftist elements as having a hand in Abat's actions.

"[The opposition] is aware that they are being infiltrated by leftists and active [communist rebels], and this is the main reason why they cannot come up with a united front," he said.

Gonzalez said Abat could easily be charged with "attempted coup d'etat, which is punishable by law."

Instability

He said he expected a resolution to the sedition charges filed against Abat by the Department of Justice.

Abat's actions indicate the prevailing political instability, according to Senate President Franklin Drilon.

"You do not find it often in other jurisdictions that a group of citizens will come out with a statement that we now have a transitory government. This certainly says a lot about our political situation," Drilon said.

He said it also demonstrated that there was still no closure on the issue of the poll fraud allegedly committed by the President with the help of former Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano.

Drilon said Abat's challenge to the government should now pose a challenge to Gonzalez.

He noted that Gonzalez was quick to file charges of inciting to sedition against former National Bureau of Investigation official Samuel Ong, who had claimed to hold the "mother" of all "Hello Garci" tapes.

"Certainly, the utterances of General Abat are more serious than the statements made by Samuel Ong. And yet it would appear that Mr. Gonzalez is so timid insofar as General Abat is concerned," Drilon said, adding that the government must apply the law equally.

Nice intermission number

Sen. Joker Arroyo expressed pity for Abat, saying the latter reminded him of cult leader Valentin de los Santos, who led his forces in a foiled attempt to attack Malacañang in the late 1960s.

Arroyo said Abat had become "senile" and should no longer be given attention.

Sen. Rodolfo Biazon, chair of the Senate committee on national defense, said he did not think the soldiers would risk their lives in defense of Abat.

Senate Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan expressed doubt that Abat would get public support.

"People are tired of rhetoric, fiery, bombastic speeches and exposés that will lead nowhere," Pangilinan said.

Even the opposition dismissed Abat's proclamation.

Said Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel: "He reminds me of Napoleon Bonaparte crowning himself emperor of France. It's a nice intermission number."

Lunacy

In the House, Lanao del Sur Rep. Benasing Macarambon said there should be "a search for the best psychiatrist in town" to deal with the 80-year-old Abat.

"What Abat did is plain lunacy. He is making himself the butt of Filipino jokes. Why can't he just fade away with whatever is left of his dignity?" Macarambon, vice chair of the House committee on national defense, said in a statement.

But Macarambon and Eastern Samar Rep. Marcelino Libanan also called on Gonzalez to immediately charge Abat and company with inciting to sedition.

Libanan said authorities could not allow anyone or any group to make a mockery of the government and attempt to overthrow it.

The League of Provinces of the Philippines said there was only one legitimate government, and Abat's "transition government" was not it.

Ignore, say govs

"[Our] position ... is to ignore Mr. Abat," Bohol Gov. Erico Aumentado, president of the association of provincial governors, told the INQUIRER.

"We recognize only one President. And that is President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo," he added. *Reports from Gil C. Cabacungan Jr., Christine O. Avendaño, Nikko Dizon, Juliet Labog-Javellana, Philip C. Tubeza, Edson C. Tandoc Jr. and Armand N. Nocum*

Abat son, an Army colonel, sacked; son-in-law in PNP under tight watch

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

A SON AND A SON-IN-LAW OF Fortunato Abat's are taking the heat for the former defense secretary's actions.

Abat's eldest son, Army Col. Victor Abat, was yesterday sacked as deputy commander of the Nueva Ecija-based 702r.d Infantry Brigade.

"He was relieved for enjoining others to join the destabilization. That's the most overt act we saw that is related to the coup," said Army chief Lt. Gen. Hermogenes Esperon.

Abat's son-in-law, Chief Supt. Jaime Caringal of the Philippine National Police is now under tight watch by his superiors.

Caringal said PNP Director General Arturo Lomibao phoned him twice—once on Sunday and again yesterday morning—to ask him if he was part of the coup plot.

Caringal, who heads the PNP Civil Security Group, said he already assured Lomibao on Monday that he would "not do anything to embarrass" the latter.

But because of Lomibao's latest call, he was prompted to call a press conference yesterday to publicly deny involvement.

"He told me the issue refuses to die down. So I'm facing the media," Caringal said.

He also said in a statement: "In the light of adverse reports linking my name to rumors of a military and police uprising, I categorically deny all allegations of my supposed involvement in any such unlawful activity."

Colonel Abat was the "baron" of the Philippine Military Academy Class of 1977.

But military insiders noted how he had not been given major assignments since his father started criticizing the Arroyo administration.

Colonel Abat was reportedly found to be passing anti-government text messages to fellow officers.

His relief was seen as an indication that the military leadership was taking the coup rumors seriously.

Esperon the other day vehemently denied that there was any coup plot.

When interviewed yesterday, he said any changes in assignments among Army officers were not related to the rumored coup.

But when interviewed again and asked about the colonel's status, Esperon admitted that the latter's relief was related to the coup.

'We will not leave until GMA's gone'

From page A1

sure" on Ms Arroyo to resign. He said he was doing this "because we do not want violence."

"*Kinokonsensiya namin siya* (We're pricking her conscience)," he said.

He added, referring to the toppling of Ferdinand Marcos and Estrada in 1986 and 2001, respectively: "Remember [when] the nation wanted to oust Marcos, Gen. Fabian Ver wanted to hit the people? Marcos walked away because he loved the people. It was the same with Erap. He walked away too so that there wouldn't be trouble."

Boisterous

Abat did not mention that certain factors that drove Estrada and Marcos out of Malacañang were missing, such as a critical mass of people in the streets, and popular or constitutionally mandated successors in the persons of Corazon Aquino and Ms Arroyo, respectively.

The atmosphere in the Waling-Waling Room, where Abat has set up his "Luklukan ng Bagong Pamahalaan" (Seat of the New Government), was boisterous and optimistic.

Abat, Enriquez and Señeres took turns in talking with TV and radio reporters.

The others who were present included lawyer Carlos Serapio, secretary general of the Coalition for Nationalist Survival, former Marinduque Gov. Jose Antonio "Bong" Carrion, former Ifugao Rep. Gualberto Lumauig, and Ali Montaha Babao, a former assemblyman of the Southern Philippines Council for Peace and Development.

Abat renewed his call for the military and the people to support the new "government."

He told the INQUIRER that some officials had "expressed" support and would arrive shortly.

He said he had even given orders to some of them "not to allow her (Ms Arroyo) to land" at the airport from Kuala Lumpur, where she attended the 11th Asean summit. (Ms Arroyo arrived last night—Ed.)

At press time yesterday, no military or police official had come to back Abat's self-proclaimed presidency.

But Abat told the INQUIRER that he was dead serious. After all, he said, he made things happen: "I'm a military man. I don't [make] wishes."

'He's my man'

Abat strongly denied suggestions that Ramos, his former boss, was behind the "transition government."

"I'm not his man. He's my man," Abat said of the former President, his classmate at the Philippine Military Academy.

Serapio brushed aside reports that Malacañang had belittled the "transition government."

"This is not a power grab for ourselves," he said, adding that their act of replacing a "decrepit, bankrupt leadership" with one that was "moral and competent" was a "noble" exercise.

Abat's aide, MD Rebueno, echoed his call for all of them to stay put at the Club Filipino until Ms Arroyo steps down.

Sleepless

"We will not leave this place until this crisis is resolved. *Walang iwanan*," Rebueno said.

He said the group had one goal: "We only want Ms Arroyo to step down."

Abat was awake practically from Tuesday night to yesterday morning, stealing only an hour-long nap at his "temporary center of government."

In between forming his supposed administration and selecting its key people, Abat managed to read several pages of a book titled "Exception to the Rulers" and written by Amy and David Goodman.

"[The book] discusses the mistakes or mishaps of US Presidents, and [also talks about] Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan," he told the INQUIRER.

The new "President" had porridge for breakfast and still wore the light brown vest he donned the night before.

If he were tired, he did a good job hiding it. Those around him tried hard to match his energy.

Referring to Ms Arroyo, Abat said: "If her ambition is to be a good President, the only way [for her] to be good is for her to get enough patriotism, enough love of country, and enough of people, to step down gracefully."

'I don't know'

Outside the room, the INQUIRER asked a waiter if he knew that a "transition government" was in place and that Club Filipino was now the "seat of a new government."

"No. I just arrived," the waiter said.

What did he think of the idea of a revolutionary government led by Abat as President?

"I don't know," he said, sounding puzzled and amused. "I think people would laugh."

The attitude of the police was as dismissive.

Metro Manila Police Director Vidal Querol said he made a pass around Club Filipino but did not get out of his vehicle.

"They might invite me to be sworn in as the new Armed Forces chief," he said with a chuckle.

Let Abat be

Querol said the police would simply let Abat be. He said it was up to the Department of Justice to take action against the retired general.

But at 10 a.m., Querol put the entire Metro Manila on full alert and told ground commanders to prepare 300 men from the civil disturbance management units "for any deployment anywhere [after] the confluence of events today."

He meant the Abat declaration, Fernando Poe Jr.'s death anniversary, and Estrada's furlough to attend the wake of his brother.

No 'Eraption': Historian ...

From page A1

partment of History at the University of the Philippines.

Yesterday, Salazar launched the first of his two-volume sociopolitical and cultural biography, "Pangulong Erap," a chronicle of Estrada from the upper middle class aligning himself with the poor.

Mistrusted by class

"Erap is a political leader who came from the elite but one who chose to cross over and become part of the (majority of the people) and because of such never gained the trust of the class he belonged to," Salazar said in the book's foreword.

He added that the traits Estrada picked up from mingling with the masses didn't sit well with his own society's elite.

"It is the same elite that never countenanced the likes of Andres Bonifacio, founder of the Katipunan, who was eventually murdered by the very same group that withdrew participation from the initial salvo of the Philippine revolution in Pinaglabanan," Salazar said.

Blaming Makati rich

Estrada has repeatedly blamed his misfortune on "the rich in Makati" and the wealthy personalities who belong to civil society groups who allegedly connived to have him ousted from Malacañang.

Bonifacio, on the other hand, was sentenced to die by the Katipunan leadership that was taken over by members of the Filipino elite during the revolution against Spain in the 1890s.

"How (Estrada) got attracted to the (masses) and how he crossed over to the social class that he was not born into is the basis of the greatness—and the tragedy—of Joseph Marcelo Ejercito," Salazar added.

From Ateneo to Palace

In this first volume, Salazar starts with how the *ilustrado* class of Filipino revolutionaries wrested the leadership from Bonifacio, the founder from the working class in Manila. Salazar saw a similarity between Bonifacio and Estrada's respective fates.

The book tells Estrada's story—from his days at the Ateneo grade school, his rise as a movie actor, and his ascent to Malacañang—and how the "hegemony of the elite" caused his downfall.

Second volume

The still to be released second volume will focus on Estrada after his fall, his plunder case and Edsa III.

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Garcillano owns up to voice on tape but ...

From page A1

conversations or occa sions." He indicated he could only give a categorical confirmation of the voice when the authenticity of the wiretap was established.

Repeating a testimony he gave to a House inquiry on Dec. 7, Garcillano said that when he talked with Ms Arroyo, she "merely inquired why her more than one million vote lead over FPJ (Fernando Poe Jr.) went down (from more than one million) to 892,000 in just a matter of three days."

He said he replied: "*Hindi ko po alam at titingnan ko ho* (I do not know and I will look into this ... I did not say *pipilitin* (I will try). *Wala naman talaga akong ginawa at wala naman akong sinabi kay presidente na pipilitin kong gawan ng paraan* (I could not really do anything and I did not tell the President that I would try and find a way)."

Garcillano explained that what he meant was he would "simply ask the ground personnel if this is the current tally as canvassed and as submitted to Congress."

A purported wiretap released by opposition lawyer Alan Paguia went like this:

Female voice: So will I still lead by more than 1M overall?

Male voice: Mga (unintelligible phrase) advantage ma'am, *parang ganun din ang lalabas* (It looks that way).

Female voice: It will not be less than 1M?

Male voice: *Pipilitin ho natin yan, pero* (We will try, but) as of the other day, 9 or 2.

Tapes manufactured

In the interview yesterday, Garcillano said the certificates of canvass had already been submitted to Congress when the conversation took place and were "beyond the reach of anybody."

During the Dec. 7 joint inquiry by five House committees, Garcillano said that he talked with Ms Arroyo once on May 24, 2004, but he said he could not "say for sure if that's my voice on the tape."

In yesterday's interview, he said that the taped conversation did occur although it was "spliced."

"I cannot accept that in its entirety. That's all I can say for certain," he said, stressing that the "very nature of the tape itself seems to have been manufactured and fabricated."

He said the authenticity of the tape was "very dubious."

"Nobody owned the authorship of the bugging and nobody has proven its genuineness," said Garcillano. He vowed to discuss the content of the tape after its authenticity had been established.

Garcillano said during his second appearance before the congressional committees on Tuesday, he was prepared to admit that the voice in the wiretap sounded like his but then none of the lawmakers asked him about it, apparently frustrated at failing to draw out categorical answers.

Agony of indecision

Garcillano called up this reporter yesterday to arrange the interview himself. He said he was ready for a no-holds-barred discussion of the poll fraud scandal which nearly brought down the Arroyo administration in July.

He told the INQUIRER his refusal at first even to admit he recognized the voice on the wiretap was due to the "agony of indecision."

"I feel that I'm already convicted. The people no longer believe whatever I say ... especially those in the opposition," he lamented.

"But (I'm saying it now) because of what you are now asking me," he said.

Garcillano said it was "possible" that both the administration and opposition camps cheated in the polls but that he had no "personal knowledge" of this.

"This is the Philippines. It's possible just like it's also possible for anyone of us to be hit by lightning now ... especially those who are not telling the truth," said Garcillano.

A lawyer, Garcillano said the burden of proof on alleged vote-padding rested with the opposition.

I did not do anything

"They said that I cheated (for Ms Arroyo) ... but where? When?" said Garcillano who maintained that there was no showing that he indeed manipulated balloting.

"*Wala naman talaga akong ginawa* (I did not do anything). They make it appear that it's me who committed irregularity during the election."

"Even on the tape ... it doesn't say that I will cheat," he stressed.

Reading from his notes scribbled on a yellow pad, Garcillano said: "I have no regrets about my decision. I never allowed pressure from either side to deter me from my rightful or moral cause."

Justifying his decision to surface on Dec. 4 after hiding for five months, he said he hoped that Filipinos "would not get tired of my explanation."

'Worn-out explanation'

"My aim is only to help in bringing forth the truth in clear light. There should be no more reason for making this case a media spectacular. The people might take this as a worn-out explanation ... about this notorious and unfortunate incident," he said.

Garcillano acknowledged that he had been already "convicted at the bar of public opinion, but the people should understand that the alleged commission of an offense requires higher degree of proof of guilt."

He maintained that the opposition was only "speculating."

"(They are) maliciously accusing me of conniving with the President and I'm now the subject of investigation in the vain hope that their fishing expedition would yield favorable result," he said.

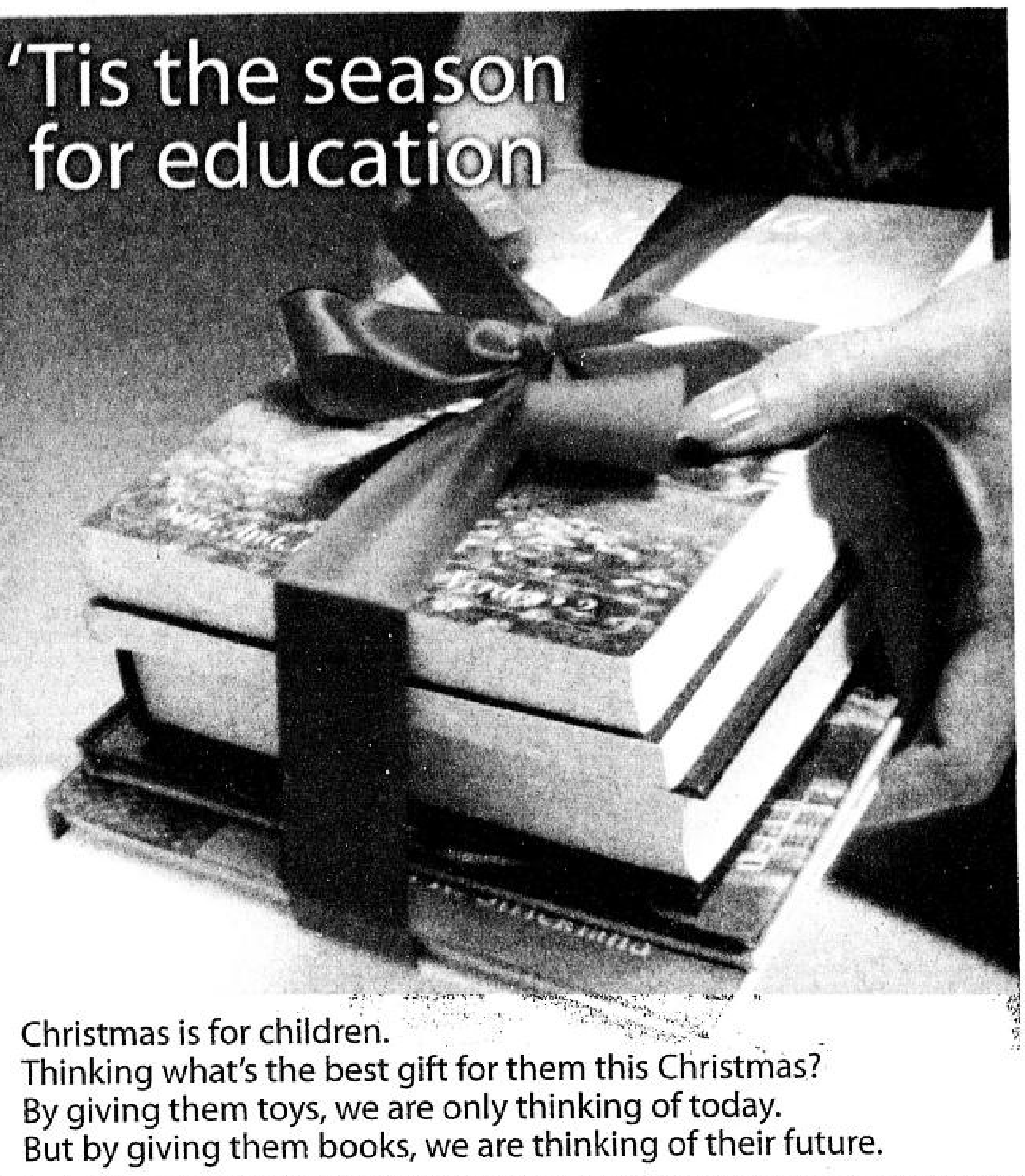
Passports show he hasn't traveled

Also yesterday, Pangasinan Rep. Amado Espino said that Garcillano's old and new passports, which were submitted to the House by his lawyer yesterday afternoon, had no entries showing that he has left the country since November 1996.

Despite this, the committees investigating the wiretapping would withhold their conclusion on the question of whether Garcillano left the country until the Department of Foreign Affairs submitted its findings on reports that Garcillano traveled to Europe and even Latin America.

"We still don't have any conclusion until all the evidence and testimonies are in. The members of the five committees will still discuss this," said Sorsogon Rep. Jose Solis, chair of the committee on national defense, one of those conducting the "Hello Garci" inquiry.

Garcillano has denied a Singapore government report to the Department of Foreign Affairs that he stopped in the city-state on July 14 en route to a third country. He said he had been hiding in the country, fearing for his life. *With a report from Philip C. Tubeza*



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SEA Games over, now who'll foot P23-M bill?

From page A1

some hotel owners, caterers and bus owners are left holding the bag.

The Philippine SEA Games Organizing Committee (Philsoc) is now faced with P22.6 million in unpaid allowances and bills for hotel accommodation, food and transportation of the foreign athletes who competed in Cebu and Negros Occidental.

Plus P20M

The amount does not include the P20 million owed by the Department of Public Works and Highways to a private contractor for the rehabilitation of Paglaum Sports Stadium, one of the two venues for the football meet in this city.

Eric Loretizo of the Bacolod SEA Games Organizing Committee (Basoc) said he was waiting for Philsoc to release the remaining P15.6 million so the committee could settle the bills incurred during the two-week meet.

He said that of the P24.7 million allotted for Bacolod, Philsoc was able to release only P9.1 million.

Jonathan Guardo, Cebu SEAG organizing committee (Cebusoc) head, went to Manila on Tuesday to remind Philsoc of its P7-million obligation to the hotels, caterers and bus owners for the accommodation, food and transportation of athletes.

Philsoc set aside P10 million for Cebu's hosting of the SEA Games but only P3 million had been released so far, Guardo said.

Quoting Cebu organizers, the Cebu Daily News reported that Cebusoc still owed P4 million to at least three hotels, P2 million to five food caterers and P1 million to a bus company.

Patience

Cebu City Councilor Sylvan Jakosalem, a Cebusoc member, asked for patience, saying it was only a week after the SEAG and that they were doing everything they could to collect money from Philsoc.

But he said Philsoc had bigger problems in Manila and Bacolod because their unpaid bills had reached more than P84 million—P74 million in Manila and more than P10 million in Bacolod.

Loretizo said that of the P9.1 million released by Philsoc, P8.9 million was used to partially settle the hotel bills.

About a thousand athletes and sport officials were billeted at 16 hotels in Bacolod City, which hosted five SEA Games events—football, boxing, weight lifting, indoor volleyball and beach volleyball.

Allowance for volunteers

But Basoc still has an outstanding balance of P12 million in hotel accommodation, according to Loretizo. He said Philsoc only released P200,000 of the P2.8 million allotted for 1,500 volunteers. The volunteers were supposed to receive P200 per day for the two-week meet.

Bacolod Rep. Monico Puentevella gave an advance payment of P1 million from his personal fund so the volunteers would be able to receive P75 a day.

Philsoc has not released the more than P1 million in allowance for liaison officers and victory stewards during the SEA Games, said Loretizo.

Waiting for GMA

But Puentevella said he expected money to be released this week to pay off Philsoc's obligations.

He said he and Philsoc chair Jose Cojuangco were waiting for President Macapagal-Arroyo to arrive from Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, where she attended the Association of Southeast Asian Nations summit so the problem could be addressed.

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METROBRIEFS

Prisoner escapes

A CHINESE inmate gave his three prison escorts the slip in Pasig City last week. Henry Co, who was serving a life sentence for drug-related cases, arrived in Manila around noon Saturday with three jail guards as escorts. New Bilibid Prisons Supt. Juanito Leopando identified the guards as Benny Rago, July Silva and Marshal Diomampo, all assigned at the Sablayan, Occidental Mindoro penal farm. They were to escort Co who was being transferred from the penal farm in Occidental Mindoro to Zamboanga del Sur. Upon reaching Manila, where they were to take a boat to Zamboanga, two of the guards, Silva and Diomampo, allowed Co, who was with his common-law wife, to check in at the Astoria Hotel in Pasig City. The next day, Co was nowhere to be found. Following his escape, his three guards were suspended and charged with gross misconduct and infidelity in the custody of prisoners under Article 223 of the Revised Penal Code.

Jocelyn R. Uy

Fake LPG tanks seized

BEWARE of fake liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) cylinders. The National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) yesterday issued this reminder to the public as its agents raided six establishments in Quezon City and Pateros allegedly using fake LPG tanks on Dec. 13. A total of 185 cylinders worth P300,000 and a motorcycle were confiscated during the NBI operation. NBI Intellectual Property Rights Division (IPRD) chief Jose Justo Yap said the bureau conducted the raids after Petron Corp., Pilipinas Shell Corp., Total Philippines Inc. and Superkalan Gaz Corp. complained about the proliferation of fake LPG tanks bearing their brand names.

Margaux C. Ortiz

Police arrest suspect in slay case

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

ANOTHER SUSPECT IN THE TORTURE AND murder of University of Santo Tomas (UST) engineering student Mark Welson Chua in 2001 has been arrested by the police.

Eduardo Tabrilla, 25, was arrested late last month while hiding in the house of a relative in Paliparan II, Dasmariñas, Cavite.

He was presented to the media yesterday at the Philippine National Police (PNP) headquarters in Camp Crame.

Chief Supt. Ismael Rafanan, chief of the PNP Intelligence Group, said they had withheld the news of Tabrilla's arrest so that he could lead them to the whereabouts of two other suspects, Joseph Tan and Michael Von Rainard Manangbao, who remain at large.

The first suspect to be arrested, Arnulfo Aparri Jr., was convicted for Chua's murder in March 2004 and sentenced to death.

Chua had exposed corruption in the UST's Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) where he was a cadet. His body, which bore torture marks, was found floating in the Pasig River on March 18, 2001.

The four suspects were also UST ROTC cadets.

"I would like to thank God Almighty. We waited four years for justice," the victim's father, Welson Chua, said during the news conference.

"It will be a great Christmas gift if we would not be made to wait four more years for justice," his wife, Amelita, added.

According to Rafanan, Manangbao is believed to be hiding in the United States while Tan is said to have escaped to Malaysia.

"We have touched base with our counterparts (in the US and Malaysia) to know their whereabouts," the police official said.

The elder Chua, meanwhile, apologized to former ROTC commandant, Maj. Demy Tejares, for accusing him of involvement in his son's murder.

"I would like to apologize if I caused him pain. I am sure he understands the agony of a father who has lost his son," he said.

AFTER several years in hiding, the police caught up with Eduardo Tabrilla, one of four suspects in the murder of a UST student. RAFFY LERMA

Where are the bugging equipment?

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

IN THE LAST COLUMN I SAID THAT THE Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (Isafp) didn't have the capability to tap phones. This information is based on my personal observation and my conversations with retired Brig. Gen. Victor Corpus, then Isafp chief.

During a Senate hearing, Lt. Gen. Generoso Senga, AFP chief of staff, also said the same thing.

If the military doesn't have the capability to tap phones, who does?

I also mentioned in Tuesday's column that during the Erap administration, the government bought sophisticated bugging devices for use by the Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Task Force (PAOCTF) headed by National Police chief Panfilo "Ping" Lacson in a concurrent capacity.

The bugging devices were used in tapping the phones of suspected kidnappers and other criminals.

There was a furor at that time over the alleged illegal use by the PAOCTF of the wiretapping equipment. The phones of some opposition politicians and journalists were allegedly tapped by Lacson's men.

Where are those sophisticated wiretapping equipment now?

When President Erap fell from power, the PAOCTF was disbanded. But the bugging devices were never turned over to the people who replaced Lacson et al. at the PNP.

Whoever got those wiretapping equipment is capable of listening in on the phone conversations of citizens.

Would it be off-tangent to speculate that those missing bugging devices from the defunct PAOCTF were used in tapping the conversations of President Macapagal-Arroyo with former Comelec Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano?

* * *

Can you blame Rear Adm. Tirso Danga, former Isafp chief and now AFP deputy chief of staff for intelligence, for his deafening (the INQUIRER described it as "intriguing") silence?

How could Danga say anything about the "Hello Garci" tapes when—if we believe him—the Isafp wasn't behind the bugging of the phone conversations between the President and Garcillano?

If the Isafp didn't have the capability to tap phones, how could it have bugged the President's now much-publicized conversations with Garcillano?

How do you expect a guy to talk about something he didn't know anything about in the first place?

* * *

Once again, the AFP and PNP are on the verge of panic because of rumors that some elements in the military and police are planning to stage a coup.

From past experience, a coup never took place when there were rumors about an impending power grab.

Edsa I and II, which were power grabs, were not preceded by coup rumors. They happened spontaneously.

* * *

Presidential Commission on Good Government chair Camilo Sabio has denied the agency has mismanaged government-sequestered companies.

Before he made that denial, Sabio should have looked into the past record of the agency.

Some of Sabio's predecessors and past officials of the agency made "milking cows" of sequestered companies.

It's public knowledge. The PCGG in the past was staffed by rapacious individuals.

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4 killed in land dispute

By DJ Yap

THE AMULETS HANGING FROM their necks proved to be useless against bullets.

Four suspected members of the Tadtad Group were killed while three more were wounded during an hour-long gunfight with the police over a land dispute in Fairview, Quezon City yesterday. Fourteen other gang members were arrested.

A policeman, PO2 Wilfredo Calinao of the Quezon City Mobile Patrol Unit, was wounded when a gang member threw a grenade.

Chief Inspector Nicolas Torre said the suspects had seemed fearless as they traded shots with the police. "It's possible that they thought they were invulnerable," owing to the amulets on their necks, he said.

Quezon City Police District director Chief Supt. Nicasio Radovan Jr. said the group was allegedly protecting squatter families occupying the lot located at the corner of Peseta and Dinar Streets, Phase 8 subdivision, North Fairview.

The police went to the area Tuesday night after the owner, a certain Lito Dominguez, complained about the armed men who were illegally occupying his property. They were met, however, by the suspects who immediately brandished their .45-caliber and .38-caliber handguns and grenades, Radovan said.

Outnumbered, the policemen retreated. When they returned at around 10 a.m. yesterday, one of the suspects threw a grenade, triggering a firefight between the two groups.

Tadtad is a cult based in Mindanao whose members believe amulets could protect them from guns and bolos.

But the arrested suspects denied they were Tadtad members. They said the amulets were only meant to ward off witchcraft. The suspects also denied that they began the gunfight.

Sonny Barros; 50

VALENTINO "SONNY" BARROS, husband of the late Commission on Elections Information Office head Sonia Dipasupil Barros, passed on at the age of 50 on Dec. 12.

He was a graduate of the University of the Philippines College of Fine Arts and the UP College of Architecture.

He is survived by his children Kiko, Miranda and Leon; sisters Dina, Carmelita, Carmencita, Benita, Nanette and Cecille; brothers-in-law Bobby Lopez, Jade Presbitero, David Murrel and Oscar Dipasupil; sisters-in-law Ester Dipasupil and Sylvia Dipasupil-Altomonte; nieces and nephews Nicolai, Nichirenea, Max, Bernard, Justin, Jericho, Julia and Jaime.

Sonny's body lies at the Immaculate Heart of Mary Church (Claret), Mahinhin St., UP Village, Diliman, Quezon City.

Interment will take place on Saturday, Dec. 17 at the Loyola Memorial Park in Marikina City after the 10 a.m. Mass at Claret Church.

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Giants thwart Realtors

Gain at least a playoff for semifinal seat

STA. LUCIA'S Damien Owens goes for a steal off Purefoods' Marquin Chandler in last night's game. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

By June Navarro

PUREFOODS CHUNKEE DOMINATED BOTH boards and whipped Sta. Lucia Realty, 84-75, last night in the San Mig Coffee-PBA Fiesta Conference at the Cuneta Astrodome.

Kerby Raymundo pulled down 18 rebounds while Marquin Chandler and rookie Jondan Salvador grabbed 12 each of the Giants' 64 total boards, 19 of them on the offensive end.

"Those offensive rebounds were big and doing it against one of the meanest frontlines in the league is really something," said Purefoods coach Ryan Gregorio after recovering from back-to-back losses following the All-Star break.

James Yap erupted for 27 points and Raymundo added 18 markers as the front-running Giants improved to 10-5 and secured at least a playoff for a semifinal slot.

Another victory over Air21 at the close of their classification-round campaign would automatically award the Giants an outright semifinal berth, the first time since they captured the 2002 Governors Cup.

GAMES TOMORROW
(Cuneta Astrodome)
4:40 p.m.—Air21 vs Coca-Cola
7:25 p.m.—San Miguel Beer vs Ginebra

"We don't give much attention to it (the semifinal lot)," said Gregorio. "Our attitude is to keep on winning and not think about the complications which might happen in the standings."

Despite the 6-foot-9 Marlou Aquino and defensive player of the year Dennis Espino, the Realtors got beaten off the boards after hauling down 46 rebounds and took their ninth defeat in 15 games.

Damian Owens, who had a near quadruple-double feat against Red Bull, finished with 22 points and 11 rebounds while Paolo Mendoza and Espino added 12 and 10 points, respectively.

Gone from the Realtors' offensive flow was rookie Alex Cabagnot who used to average nine points per game but went 0 of 13 from the field in the face of Roger Yap's smothering defense.

"The key here is teamwork. We just sat down with our import (Chandler) and told him that he can't do it alone," said Gregorio. "Good thing he took the backseat and let the locals shine."

Gregorio said the Giants begged off from practice the past two days as the coaching staff persuaded Chandler to get his teammates more involved in offense.

The scores:

PUREFOODS 84—Yap 27, Raymundo 18, Chandler 16, Yap 9, Salvador 8, Pingris 4, Castillo 2, Artadi 0, Billones 0, Limpot 0.

STA. LUCIA 75—Owens 22, Mendoza 12, Espino 10, Calimag 9, Omolon 9, Aquino 5, Duremdes 4, Tolomia 2, Gonzales 2, Catli 0, Cabagnot 0.

Quarters: 30-21, 42-35, 62-56, 84-75.

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77	Vietnam

Lim goes to Court of Appeals as last recourse

EMBATTLED BASKETBALL ASSOciation of the Philippines secretary general Graham Lim has sought the help of the Court of Appeals to stop his impending deportation.

This came after the Office of the President denied for the second time Lim's appeal regarding his citizenship status.

Lim's counsel, lawyer Noli Singson, filed the appeal before the CA on Tuesday.

Bureau of Immigration Commissioner Alipio Fernandez had announced earlier that the BI will implement the deportation order against Lim if the 15-day period given him to appeal to the higher court expires.

Lim said the case against him is a political issue, pointing out that political figures involved in Philippine sports are behind the move to banish him from the country, which has been his and that of his family's home since birth.

Deploring what he claims are human rights violation, abuse of power and political harassment being done to him, Lim said his passport was cancelled without a court decision and that the BI is set to deport him even without a court decision or order.

Saying that the country, has a "two-faced" justice system, Lim cited an earlier ruling by Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita on the case of Fil-foreign player Rudy Hatfield. Ermita had noted that Hatfield can't be deported until a court officially decides whether Hatfield is a Filipino or not.

Lim also cited the case of former congressman Harry Angping, who was declared an alien after violating the country's immigration laws. He said Angping's passport was not cancelled in the absence of a court order as declared by the Department of Foreign Affairs.

Lim, whose ancestors came from Tuguegarao City in Cagayan Valley during the Spanish era in the 1800s, was the subject of complaint filed by his former close associates in the BAP since 2001.

Noting that powerful figures close to Malacañang were behind the deportation case, Lim said his only hope now is that the "Rule of Law" will be applied.

LIM: Political harassment

SPORTSWATCH

Pichay chess Dec. 19

NO LESS THAN 40 TEAMS ARE JOINING THE 1ST Surigao del Sur Rep. Prospero "Butch" Pichay Chess Tournament to be held Dec. 19 to 21 at the Celebrity Sports Plaza in Quezon City. Heading the list of entries are Tagaytay City Chess Club headed by Grandmaster Joey Antonio and supported by Mayor Abraham "Bambol" Tolentino Jr. and Filway, led by GM Mark Paragua. Other notable teams eyeing the P200,000 top prize are Surigao of lawyer Frank Sunga, Tabayas represented by Jojit Camacho; Calamba City, bankrolled by Mayor Joaquin Chipeco Jr.; DepEd headed by Raffy Dionisio; Makati-NCR represented by Dang Teves; Congress headed by Fransisco "Kiko" Angeles; Asia Cargo led by Allen Gandia, Cavite City; Tabilog Brokerage System of Loren Tabilog; Makati Hope Christian School under Dr. Wilfredo Tiu and Tacloban City headed by Mario Rebano. Call NM Cesar Caturla at 0928-7132397.

Mendoza-Arzaga tilt

NCFP VICE PRESIDENT FOR LUZON AND PRIMANIla Plans Inc. CEO Ed Madrid will be the guest of honor in the Mendoza-Arzaga Law Firm Chess Team Championship which kicks off on Saturday at the 4F of J&F Divino Bldg. at 967 Aurora Blvd. near LRT 2 Anonas Station in Quezon City. Madrid and lawyer Marilu Arzaga-Mendoza will push the ceremonial moves before hostilities begin at 11 a.m. More than P75,000 worth of cash prizes, trophies and medals will be contested in this two-day event. Among the teams competing are Yakult Phils. Inc., IGEN PORTAL/BOC, Nova-Eisley Marketing, Cubao Knights, Gandia of Asia Cargo, Phil. Navy, DLSU-Taft, UP, PCCr, PCU, FEU, Dep-Ed, SSS, L3P, Mariano's team, Legaspi Law office of Olongapo, Tagaytay and Antipolo. For details, call MCC at 826-8560 and 0916-852-1069 or 0922-539-7392.

Hobe Bihon prevails

HOBE BIHON IS THIS YEAR'S PICAA FILIPINO-CHInese basketball champion. Ex-pro Alvin Teng scored eight of his game-high 24 points in the payoff period to power Hobe to a 76-73 win over Mighty Filter King in their winner-take-all title showdown at the Philippine Buddhacare gym in Quezon City. Teng was later named as most valuable player of the meet. Ferdie Go added 22 points, including back-to-back triples that doused cold water on Mighty Filter's rally. Basketball Association of the Philippines executive vice president Christian Tan awarded the championship trophy to Hobe, assisted by Picaa commissioner Eusebio "Boy" Ong.

Honda One Make Race

HONDA PHILIPPINES INC., IN COOPERATION WITH Speedgear Sports Inc. will stage the "2005 Honda One Make Race" this Saturday at the Subic International Raceway of the Subic Bay Freeport Zone. The event wraps up the Honda XRM and Wave Challenge series for 2005. Motocross legend Jolet Jao and multi-titled slalom champion Joey Almeda, president of the organizing Speedgear Sports Inc., still lead the cast in the Expert division. Contact Speedgear Sports Inc. at 0928-7447000, or visit the Honda website at www.hondaph.com for details.

Las Piñas cockfest

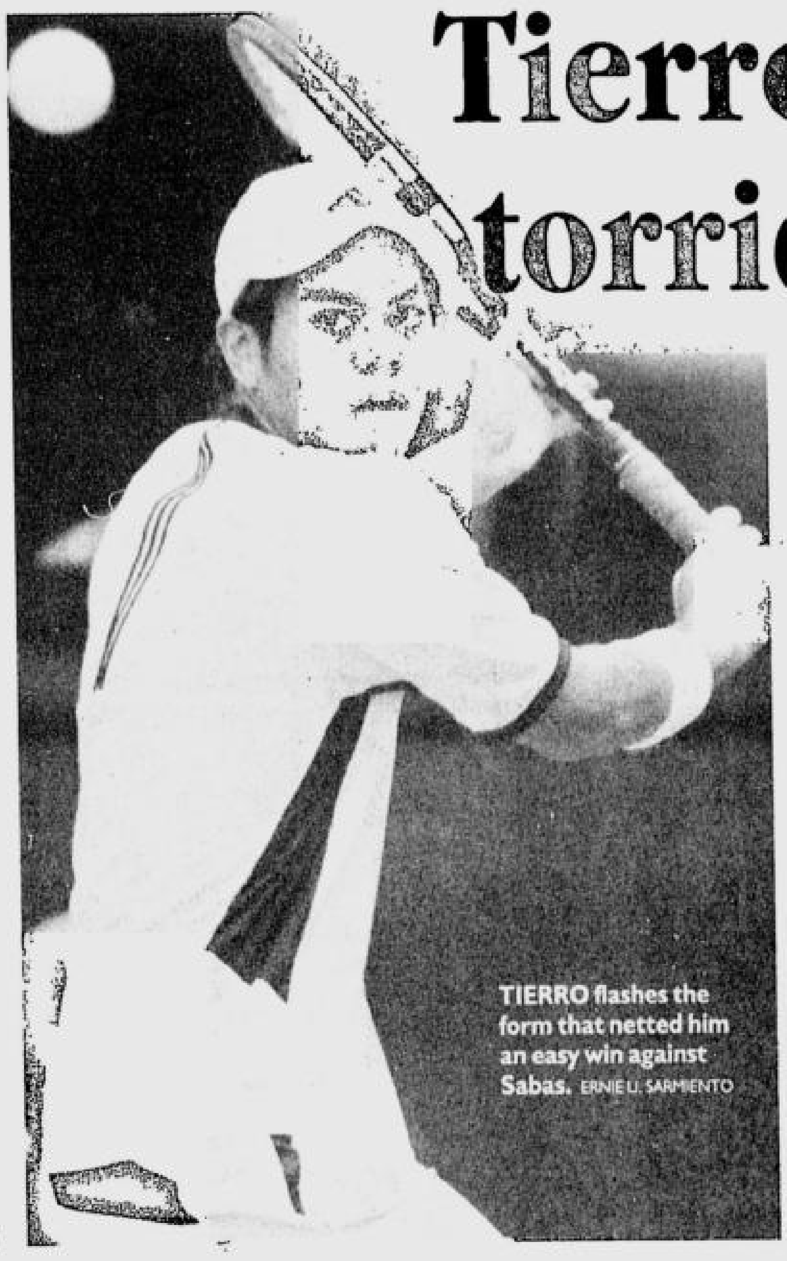
COCKERS OF PARAÑAQUE, MUNTINLUPA, PASAY, Las Piñas, Cavite and Laguna collide in a 3-cock derby tonight at the air-conditioned Las Piñas Coliseum. Hosts Albert Samson, Pidio Recto and Vetsin Damian said about 58 fights will be unleashed beginning at 7 p.m. At stake is a cash prize of P300,000. For details, call 873-1040 and 874-3910. Two more 3-cock events are lined up on Dec. 20 (Benjie Castanares) and Dec. 22 (Rudy Sayaman). Regular hackfights are scheduled at the Las Piñas Coliseum from Monday to Sunday.

Nine cockers win

NINE PARTICIPANTS TOPPED THE 278-ENTRY Apordabol Na, Incredibol Pa 5-cock derby of Roligon Mega Cockpit Monday night. Luckiest among them was J. R. Cuba of Laguna, who drove home the brand new Mazda after his bet, ZA More, posted the fastest winning time. The other champs were William Go, Bobot Booc, Allan Siaco, Boy Tanyag, Albert Casmot, Jojo Nisay, A. Capada and Alva Ness. Up next at Roligon is the Cash Premyo 3-cock derby on Dec. 20, with P300,000 on the line. Entry fee is P4,400, said hosts Tiling Capitan, Mario Gujelde, Michael Manuguid and Jog. Call 851-2275, 852-9812 and 833-1638.

SJC daytime event

THE CROWD-DRAWING DAYTIME 4-COCK DERBY enters its second round at 5 p.m. today at the air-conditioned San Juan Coliseum with 70 fights lined up and Sagupaan Complexor 3000 as sponsor. With Aba Badiola and SJC management as hosts, the event stakes a guaranteed prize of P1 million plus a brand new owner-type jeep. Entry fee is P4,400. Badiola said more than 60 new participants will field straight four cocks on Saturday's championship round. For details, call 725-5369 or 0917-8069780 (Aba).



TIERRO flashes the form that netted him an easy win against Sabas. ERNIE U. SARMIENTO

Tierro, Arcilla sustain torrid PCA Open pace

By Marc Anthony Reyes

WHO'S AFRAID OF THE KOREANS?

Certainly not top Filipino netters PJ Tierro and Johnny Arcilla, who barged into the quarterfinals yesterday and looked forward to a meeting with the top-seeded Koreans in the men's singles of the PCA Open tennis championships at the PCA Shell courts.

The country's No. 1 Tierro, seeded second here, outclassed Mario Sabas, 6-1, 6-0, even as fourth seeded Arcilla routed Miguel Narvaez, 6-0, 6-3.

The 20-year-old Tierro finished the match in less than 40 minutes, using a powerful serve he developed from months of competing abroad. He said he's raring to square off with any of the Koreans in his bracket.

Defending champion Chung Hee Seok demolished Jaime Solon, 6-2, 6-0, to also advance in the event presented by Gov. Muslim "Wahab" Akbar. However, he faces compatriot Hee Sung Chung in the quarterfinals after Chung booted out Michael Basco, 6-3, 6-0.

Third seed Seo Yung Bum handily beat Nico Riego de Dios, 6-4, 6-1, to set a duel against eighth seed Alexander Lazaro, a 6-2, 0-6, 6-3 victor over Korean Hoon Seung Oh.

"I already saw them play especially Seok," said the lanky, 6-foot Tierro, who quit his studies at La Salle to focus on competing. "He is a good player but I think he's not really unstoppable."

The 30-year-old Seok missed meeting Tierro last year after the Filipino skipped the 2004 PCA Open to compete in India.

Seok, however, is bundled in the upper half of the draw sheet with Arcilla, who will next take on Rolando Ruel Jr., a 6-1, 6-4 winner over Rocky Paglalunan.

"I'm confident of my game and though it's going to be difficult because he (Seok) is the defending champion," said the 26-year-old Arcilla who lost to Seok in the semis last year.

Adelo Abadia also moved up to the next round after edging Elbert Anasta, 6-1, 6-7 (2), 6-2.

In the doubles competitions, top seed Czarina Mae Arevalo and Jennifer Saret clobbered Joanne Bibal and May Herrera, 6-0, 6-0, to reach the quarterfinals.

Also winning their matches were Rina Caniza and Annie dela Peña, Karen Reyes and Anna Songco, sisters Bien and Bambi Zoleta, Ivy de Castro and Alyssa Labay and Arra Micayabas and Aileen Rogan.

Cañiza and Dela Peña subdued Kristel Samala, 7-5, 6-0, Reyes and Songco overpowered Krissy Alina and Lourdes Benoya, 0-6, 6-0, 6-3, the Zoletas walked over Tracy Bautista and Zhane Quitara, De Castro and Labay walked over Bhea Espinosa and Amanda Romero, while Micayabas and Rogan thumped Hiromi Shimoda and Aiza Soriano.

Mike's gift

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO THAT "OTHER prize" promised our gold medal winners in the recent 23rd SEA Games?

I refer to the all-expense paid trips to the San Fabian beach resort in Pangasinan and Banawe, with every gold medalist given the bonus of being accompanied by two relatives in both sojourns.

I pray they've not been placed in the backburner in the light of another gift from Mike Arroyo, the First Gentleman, sending Team Philippines to Hong Kong's Disneyland.

I have no beef with Hong Kong's Disneyland, a definite visitor's delight, particularly to the first-timer, given the world-acclaimed fantasies this entertainment marvel has been offering mankind for decades.

But if you ask me, there's no substitute to seeing your country first before visiting foreign soil.

The first time I saw San Fabian beach —thanks to Jeremy Regino—I thought I was in Hawaii's Waikiki.

The first time I saw Banawe—thanks to the Tour of Luzon cycling marathon—I thought I was in Austria, that magical, beautiful mountaintop where Julie Andrews sang, "... the hills are alive" in the movie, "Sound of Music."

I'm sure many of our athletes haven't been to either San Fabian beach or Banawe, that resort kissing the skies of the Cordilleras where the world-renowned rice terraces are located. A trip to both tourist spots could further rekindle nationalistic fervor among our sports heroes, a major factor that somehow pushed them to achieve heights of golden feats in the recent SEA Games.

For the record, there were a total of 113 gold medals won en route to the Philippines' first ever overall championship since the country began competing in the SEA Games in 1977.

I bet you you'd be lucky to find even just 10 of the 113 gold medalists, who had already gone to either San Fabian or Banawe.

While it may be true that Disneyland is a wondrous place to see, I say history- and impact-wise, it cannot compare with Banawe's rice terraces, which remain one of the world's seven wonders.

Surely, while Disneyland has been designed for kids, it is also for adults whose romance with kid stuff is deathless.

Should the First Gentleman push through with his plan, he'll be in seeming defiance to the antis' reason that expenses for the trip "could instead be used to fund sustained training or the improvement of training facilities, or even converted into money and handed down as gift to the athletes this Christmas."

Bottom line is, to the needy, cold cash will matter most in the end. After all, not many of our athletes are well-off. A lot of them are marginalized, if not continue to live below poverty-line levels.

* * *

Four guys based up in Baguio that I also admire for their humility, aside from Art Ng and Dez Bautista, are Shean Bedi, Freddie Alquiroz, Tony Versoza and Ed Camacho.

Shean, a decent Fil-Estate executive, now busies himself sitting by the fireside watching his son tend to his "Filling Station" joint at Camp John Hay.

Freddie, as usual, is busy as a bee at the sprawling John Hay complex, where he practically does work all over at the former R & R area of the Americans, including maintaining the charm of John Hay's Manor.

Tony V plays golf all the time, trustful of his men, who operate the Country Waffle, still a much-admired and well-loved haunt among Baguio's gourmet years after my good friend Bert Nievera thought he had left it for dead.

And Ed Camacho. Oh, yes, this guy with a walrus for a moustache now operates John Hay's driving range, but the real come-ons in his log-and-cabin joint are his goat menu, not to mention his mushroom-and-ampalaya leaves fare.

See you all soon, guys.

* * *

FASTBREAK. Let's give credit where credit is due. San Miguel Corp. bankrolled 13 disciplines in the 23rd SEA Games—the most by any single entity. If that's not heroism of the first degree, what is?

* * *

Send comments to menju@pldtdsl.net

Chairman's Cup caps S'woods tourney sked

THE 2005 CHAIRMAN'S CUP Tournament starting today a the Masters and Legends courses of Manila Southwoods caps a year-round schedule of events at the prestigious golf club in Carmona, Cavite.

And organizers are making sure they end the year with a bang.

The Chairman's Cup being staged annually in honor of MSGCC chairman of the board Robert John Sobrepeña is an 18-hole competition. But to accommodate as many members as possible, the club is allowing tee-offs for three straight days.

"Since it's actually designed to be a thanksgiving event for our members who have continuously made Southwoods their second home, we want most, if not all, of them to be part of the Chairman's Cup," said Sobrepeña.

Prizes worth almost P4 million will be given away, topped by a Mitsubishi GLX donated by Mitsubishi Motors Philippines Inc. and Diamond Motors, a seven-night Alaska Cruise from Royal Caribbean, two business class tickets Manila-Vancouver-Manila from Korean Air, a Wilson set of irons and a bag, a vacation package for two to El Nido and P100,000 worth of Samsung appliances.

Club Car, through its local distributor Turf Co., is also offering a Precedent professional model as a hole-in-one prize.

The event's major backers include Nestle, MRT and Golforce. Minor sponsors are Starmaker, Rudy Project, Yakult Phils., Newlife Center, Bayo, Golf Shop at Baron Travel, Club Leisure Management Corp., Camp John Hay Development Co., Citibank and American Express.

In the awarding ceremonies on Saturday, trophies and prizes will be given to the overall net champion, the overall low gross and the top three winners per division.

Those assigned to play on the first two days will have shotgun starts of 7:30 a.m. at the Legends and 8 a.m. at the Masters. Those taking the Dec. 17 tee-off will start at 10:30 a.m. at Legends and 11 a.m. at the Masters.

's Time to Give Back

NIKE BACKS JUNGOLF: Nike is presenting the 30th Jungolf Anniversary Golf Tournament on Dec. 22 at the Riviera Golf & Country Club, Couples Course. Signing the sponsorship agreement are (from left) Jungolf directress Vannie Monsalve, chair Amalia Montecillo, Lloyd Matutina of Nike Golf and Jungolf president Generoso "Bang" Mamaril. Standing (from left) are Jungolf directors Arnel Agustin and Gerry Handog and Roland Sumague of Nike Golf.

MEDALISTS from the 23rd SEA Games, including rising taekwondo sensation John Paul Lizardo, were rewarded trendy timepieces by L Timestudio recently. They are joined by L Timestudio marketing manager Lorenz Manalang, Waffle marketing president Auty Villarama, Philippine Sports Commission Chairman William "Butch" Ramirez and commissioners Richie Garcia, Ambrosio de Luna, Joey Mundo and Leon Montemayor.

FASHION WATCHES

SEAG stars feted by L Timestudio

FILIPINO ATHLETES WHO WON GOLD medals that gave the Philippines its first-ever overall championship in the 23rd Southeast Asian Games deserve rewards and recognition.

It's for this reason that L Timestudio, distributors of internationally known watch brands such as Fossil, Diesel, DKNY, Emporio Armani, Kenneth Cole, Lacoste, Levis, ODM, Playboy, Reaction, Victorinox Swiss Army, Nike and Philippine brand Bench, made its humble tribute to the country's medalists in the 23rd SEA Games by giving them fashion timepieces.

Filipino athletes, from triple-gold medalists diver Shiela Mae Perez, swimmer Miguel Molina and rower Benjie Tolentino to bronze finishers Rene Herrera and John Lozada of athletics received their rewards from L Timestudio executives during a recent victory party at the Ninoy Aquino Stadium, attended by President Macapagal-Arroyo, First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo and Philippine Sports Commission chairman Butch Ramirez and the four PSC Commissioners.

L Timestudio stores are located at The Power Plant Mall, Shangri-La Plaza Mall, SM Megamall, The Podium, Robinsons Pioneer, Robinsons Galleria, SM North Edsa, Alabang Town Center, Festival Supermall, SM Batangas, SM Pampanga, Market! Market!, SM San Lazaro, SM Bicutan, SM Baguio, Limketkai Mall, Greenhills Shopping Center, SM Southmall, SM Supercenter Valenzuela.

Golf rewind: Major shots that get lost in the moment

TIGER Woods hit some of this year's most memorable shots.

THOUSAND OAKS, CALIFORNIA—THE best shots by major champions are not always the most memorable.

Sometimes, they look so routine that they don't even get the courtesy of a replay. In the case of Tiger Woods at the British Open, his best were never shown on TV.

There was nothing extraordinary about his five-shot victory, a calculated performance at the Old Course that kept a small cast of challengers from catching him.

Even so, Woods knew right away that Sunday at St. Andrews would be special, starting with a series of shots not many people saw.

That's because they were on the practice range.

"I hit the 100-yard sign four straight times," Woods said in an interview last week. "That was the start of my warmup. I hit a couple of little wedges to loosen up, then hit to the sign. Peppered it four straight times in the air, on the right zero—not the middle zero, the right zero."

Swing coach Hank Haney was standing behind him, quietly impressed, and offered some advice to the caddie.

"He hit that sign four times in a row—and five out of eight," Steve Williams said. "Hank says to me, 'The first time he gets inside 100 yards, you might want to tell him to aim away from the flag.'"

Williams laughed, just as he did that day. Turns out it wasn't a joke.

"First time I'm inside 100 yards is on No. 6," Woods said. "I had 98 yards to the hole. What happens? I one-hop it off the flag and it spins off the shelf."

Woods had to scramble for par, and on the way to the next tee, Williams told him what Haney said on the range.

"I said, 'You idiot, why didn't you just tell me to aim away from the flag?' It's not that hard," Woods said.

The majors this year will be remembered for signature moments, although it was tough to find one at St. Andrews. Woods' pitch on the 12th hole, which led to a birdie and a two-shot swing, was as good as any.

Masters

Woods' chip from behind the 16th green made a U-turn at the top of the slope, trickled toward the hole, paused two full seconds on the edge of the cup for effect, and became part of Augusta National lore the moment it dropped for birdie. For all of his magic, he now is best identified by that shot.

As dramatic as that was, however, Woods was prouder of two shots that were simply steady—his 3-wood off the tee in the playoff with Chris DiMarco, and an equally pure 8-iron into 15 feet that set up his winning birdie.

US Open

Michael Campbell was scratching out pars along the back nine as Tiger Woods was closing in. Woods certainly helped the cause with two late bogeys that gave Campbell a cushion.

But this was Pinehurst No. 2, where shots are dropped easily. Campbell delivered a knockout punch with his 20-foot birdie putt on the 17th hole that gave him a three-shot lead.

Still, the Kiwi won the US Open on the par-3 15th with a bunker shot that ranks among the best of the year.

PGA Championship

Phil Mickelson was up to his ankles in rough to the right of the 18th green, tied with Steve Elkington and Thomas Bjorn, needing to get up-and-down from some 50 feet to win his second major.

It was the kind of chip he had practiced countless times in his backyard as a boy in San Diego.

But while Mickelson is among the best with a wedge, the shot that might have won the PGA was his drive. Baltusrol was softer and longer, with a stiff breeze. Mickelson needed birdie to win. He needed to be in the fairway.

Mickelson reached out and tapped the plaque for Jack Nicklaus, who hit the 18th green with a 1-iron to win the 1967 US Open. He could not have done that from the rough.

"Ultimately, I had a chance to go at the green on 18, and almost got it up," Mickelson said. "But I ended up making birdie."

That's all that mattered. *AP*

US sprinter loses it all for 'doping'

LONDON—TIM MONTGOMERY'S 100-METER world record was broken earlier this year. Now it's been wiped completely from the books.

The American sprinter was banned for two years Tuesday in the BALCO steroid scandal, and all his results, medals and prize money over the past five years were annulled.

Two-time Olympic relay medalist Chryste Gaines also received a two-year ban from the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) in Lausanne, Switzerland.

Neither runner tested positive for drugs. They were banned based on evidence gathered in the criminal investigation of the Bay Area Laboratory Co-Operative and the testimony of fellow sprinter Kelli White.

The US Anti-Doping Agency had requested four-year suspensions for both runners, but CAS—the highest court in sports—cut the penalty in half. The decisions are final and binding.

The bans were backdated to June 6, 2005, the first day of Montgomery's hearing.

CAS voided all of Montgomery's performances since March 31, 2001, and Gaines' results since Nov. 30, 2003.

That means Montgomery's former world 100-meter record of 9.78 seconds—set in Paris in September 2002—is no longer recognized. The record was lowered to 9.77 by Jamaica's Asafa Powell on June 14 in Athens, Greece.

Another former record holder, Canadian sprinter Ben Johnson, was stripped of his marks after testing positive for steroids at the 1988 Seoul Olympics.

Montgomery, 30, will also lose the 100-meter silver medal from the 2001 World Championships, a race won by former record holder Maurice Greene. The silver will now go to fellow American Bernard Williams, with Ato Boldon going from fourth to bronze. *AP*

Returnees fire up Heat

Comebacking Shaq, Riley help Miami edge Chicago

CHICAGO—SHAQUILLE O'NEAL scored 30 points on his first start since coming back from injury and Pat Riley enjoyed a winning return as Miami Heat coach in a 100-97 road win over the Chicago Bulls on Tuesday.

Riley, the team's president and former coach, took over coaching duties for a second time earlier this week when Stan Van Gundy resigned for personal reasons.

PAT RILEY, who made Armani suits a fad in the NBA, is back in the sidelines with the Heat. AP

The alarm bells would have been ringing when he saw Miami's double-digit lead in the fourth quarter drop to just two, but the Heat managed to hold on to improve to 12-10, and 3-1 with O'Neal in the lineup.

"It's going to take me time to get up to speed on everything," Riley admitted after the game.

O'Neal played in his second game since missing 18 contests with a sprained ankle and started for the first time after coming off the bench in the overtime win over Washington on Sunday. Miami is 3-1 with the hulking center around.

Dwyane Wade added 14 points and had 11 rebounds for the Heat, while Antoine Walker also scored 14 points.

Alonzo Mourning turned in another solid effort off the bench for Miami, contributing 11 points and 12 rebounds in just 20 minutes.

The Bulls had one last chance to tie the game on a three-pointer as time expired, but Luol Deng's shot went off the rim as the buzzer sounded.

In Washington, Jarvis Hayes scored 19 points as the Wizards beat the New Jersey Nets 94-74.

Caron Butler scored 12 points and had 10 rebounds for the Wizards. Vince Carter scored 14 points and Richard Jefferson scored 13 points for the Nets.

In Cleveland, Al Harrington scored 20 points as the Atlanta Hawks beat the Cavaliers, 100-94.

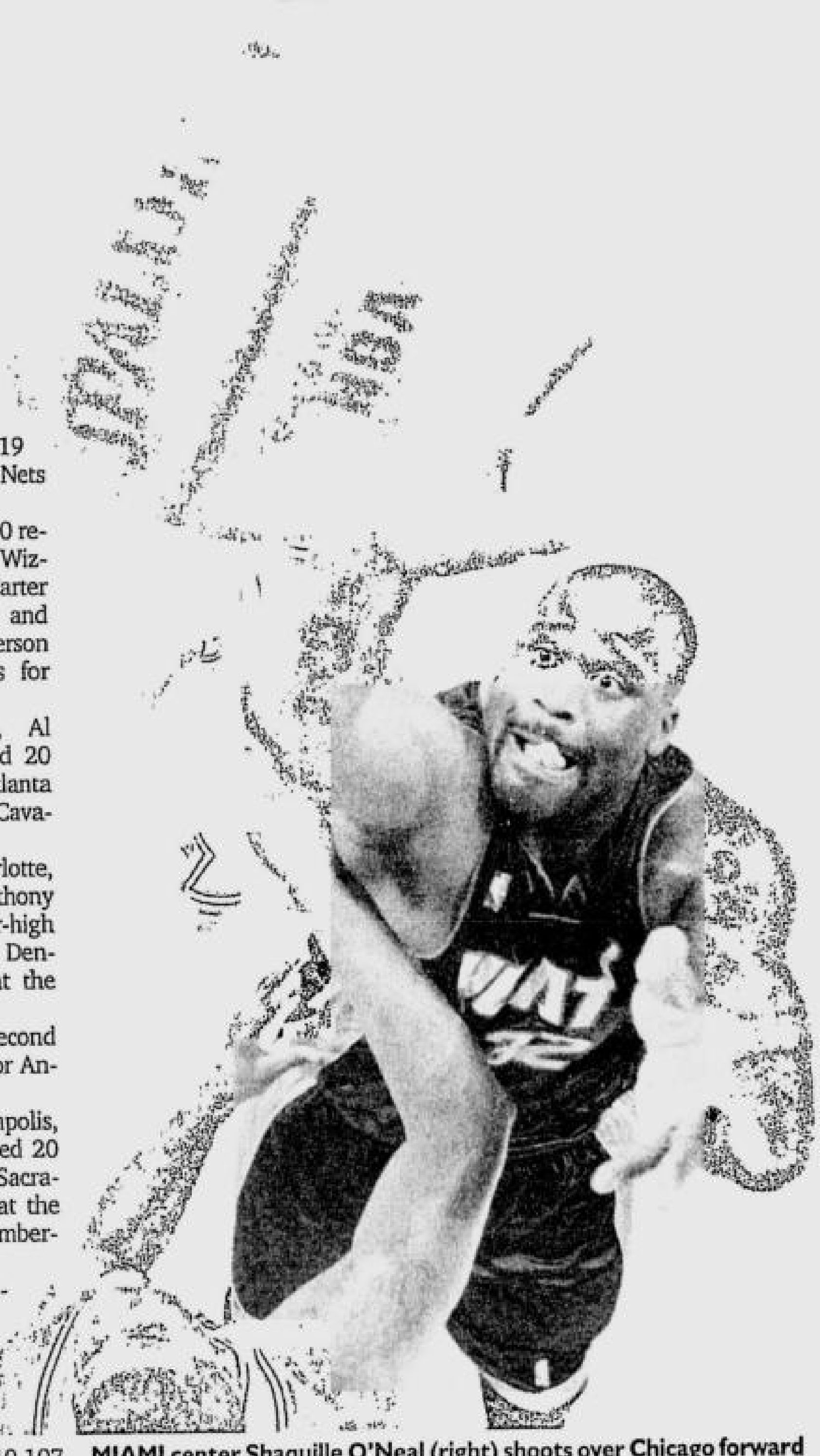
In Charlotte, Carmelo Anthony scored a career-high 42 points as the Denver Nuggets beat the Bobcats, 101-85.

It was the second 40-point effort for Anthony in a week.

In Minneapolis, Bonzi Wells scored 20 points as the Sacramento Kings beat the Minnesota Timberwolves, 93-91.

In San Antonio, Tim Duncan scored 27 points and had 22 rebounds as the Spurs beat the Los Angeles Clippers, 95-87, in overtime.

In Seattle, Derek Fisher scored 26 points and Baron Davis added 21 in leading the Golden State Warriors to a 110-107 overtime win against the SuperSonics. *Reuters*



MIAMI center Shaquille O'Neal (right) shoots over Chicago forward Michael Sweetney (bottom). O'Neal finished with 30 points. REUTERS

Judah's belts on the line vs Argentine

NEW YORK—UNDISPUTED WELTERWEIGHT boxing champion Zab Judah will face Argentina's Carlos Baldomir on Jan. 7 at Madison Square Garden.

"It means so much to me to again be fighting in my hometown and at the Garden," Judah said.

Judah, 34-2 with one no-contest and 25 knockouts, is a three-time world champion. After Baldomir, he wants his next fight to be against Floyd Mayweather Jr. Baldomir is 41-9-6 with 12 KOs.

Judah won the undisputed welterweight title in February, stopping Cory Spinks in the ninth round, and defended it against Cosme Rivera of Mexico in May, with a third-round stoppage. *AP*

Yankees' Matsui torn between club and country

TOKYO—STILL UNDECIDED IF HE'LL take part in the inaugural World Baseball Classic, Japanese star Hideki Matsui is torn between an obligation to an entire nation and the New York Yankees.

In a country that places a premium on duty, there is tremendous pressure on Matsui to represent Japan at the World Cup-style tournament in March. Just about everywhere he goes these days, the Yankee outfielder is asked why he has yet to agree to play.

"I'm also a Yankee," Matsui said told reporters Tuesday.

Adding to the pressure is the fact that legendary home run hitter and former Yomiuri Giants star Sadaharu Oh is Japan's manager and has personally appealed to Matsui to join the team. Oh reportedly was able to convince a reluctant Ichiro Suzuki to take part.

Suzuki may be Japan's best player, but Matsui comes closest to matching the power of baseball's top hitters.

Japan failed to win a baseball medal at the Sydney Olympics and vowed to do better in international competitions by using its top players. It won the bronze medal in Athens with a team of professionals but, as major leaguers, the likes of Matsui and Suzuki couldn't take part.

Japanese baseball fans are eager to see how their best players would stack up against the top players from the United States, the Dominican Republic and Cuba.

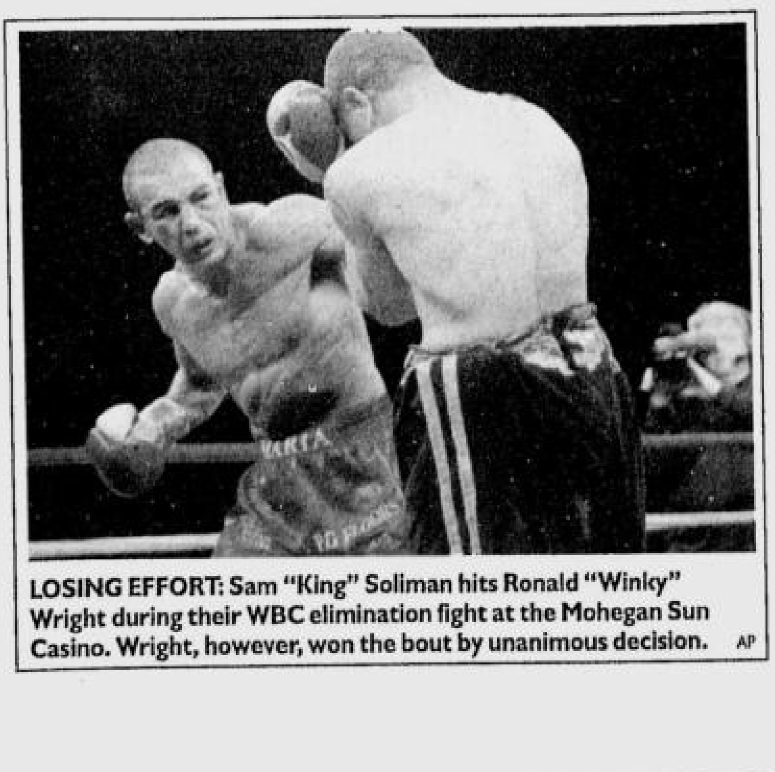
Matsui has said that he wants to make a decision soon and that it would be rude to keep Oh and Japanese fans waiting too long.

At a press conference last week, Oh said he is 100 percent sure Matsui will be joining the team and has left a roster spot open for the Japanese star.

Matsui last month agreed to a $52 million, four-year contract with the Yankees and has repeatedly said he wants to improve on his statistics from last season.

Japan will be home for the first round of the tournament, March 3-5 at the Tokyo Dome. Japan is part of Group A, with South Korea, China and Taiwan.

Matsui is also tremendously proud of his consecutive games streak and is reluctant to jeopardize that. He has played in 1,787 consecutive professional games (1,250 with Yomiuri, 487 with the Yankees). His streak of 487 consecutive games played with the Yankees is the longest streak by any Yankee since Lou Gehrig's 2,130-game streak. *AP*



LOSING EFFORT: Sam "King" Soliman hits Ronald "Winky" Wright during their WBC elimination fight at the Mohegan Sun Casino. Wright, however, won the bout by unanimous decision. AP

Seles: 2006 tennis comeback or retirement

NEW YORK—MONICA SELES SAID IF SHE doesn't get back on the tennis court by the end of 2006, she may hang up her racket.

Seles, a nine-time Grand Slam winner, attended a Manhattan luncheon in her honor Tuesday at a restaurant owned by actor Robert De Niro. She's joining the Laureus World Sports Academy, which brings sports and social programs to underprivileged youth around the world.

It may prove to be a transition into another career. Seles never officially retired, but last played a Grand Slam tournament in 2003. A broken bone in her right foot has hampered her return.

"I'm still training and still trying, but at the same time I'm realistic," Seles said. "After 2006, if not, then it's pretty sure. You have to move on."

Seles, a dominant player known for her loud grunts during play, won three Grand Slam tournaments in both 1991 and 1992. Her meteoric rise was interrupted in 1993 when she was stabbed in the back by an obsessed fan of Steffi Graf at a tournament in Hamburg, Germany. Seles was ranked No. 1 at the time.

"I had a very unusual career, to say the least," she said. "I had some highs and lows. But at the end of the day, I got to do something I loved to do. As a little girl, how I started playing tennis was very simple. That part, I'm proud to say, has never changed. To me, I get a great joy just hitting the ball."

The 32-year-old put no timeline on a return in 2006.

"My game is not at the level that I personally feel comfortable playing against the girls," she said. "It's my foot. It's giving me not as much time to train, to put in my many hours. The consistency is just not there."

So what's her level of play now?

"It's OK," she said, laughing. "If it were good, I wouldn't be here. I'd be training."

Seles is encouraged by Martina Hingis' expected return to tennis in January after a three-year retirement because of injuries.

"It's fantastically exciting," Seles said. "She's so young still and she was so good. I'm a big fan of hers. She was a great No. 1 player. She was a chess player out there."

Seles said she'll be satisfied with her career if it ends without a return to the court. She's won 53 singles titles and more than $14 million in prize money.

Edwin Moses, a two-time Olympic gold medalist in the 400-meter hurdles, is the chair of the Laureus World Sports Academy. He introduced Seles as the 42nd member of the academy, founded in 2000 and based in London.

"Monica is a pleasant find," Moses said. *AP*

10-COUNTRY MEET

Asean Para Games get going today

WITH THE THEME "TRIUMPH OF THE competitive Spirit," the finest differently abled athletes from all over Southeast Asia gathered yesterday at the historic Rizal Memorial Track and Football Stadium for the opening of the Third Asean Para Games.

An estimated crowd of 20,000, including representatives from the 897 barangays and 130 public and private schools all over Manila, witnessed the colorful inaugurals of the week-long multi-event competition.

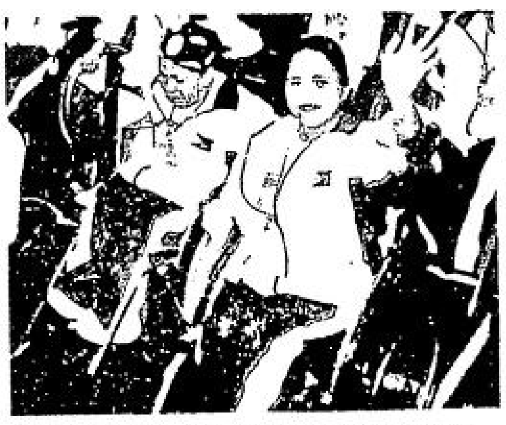
On hand to grace the event, which is being staged by the Philippine Asean Para Games Organizing Committee (PAPGOC) chaired by Michael Barredo, were Asean Para Sports Federation president Zainal Abuzarin of Malaysia, Sen. Pia Cayetano, DSWD Secretary Lualhati Pablo, and Manila Mayor Lito Atienza.

Mayor Atienza welcomed the participants from 10 countries and underscored the city government's firm commitment not only to the development of sports, but also to encourage support for the upliftment of the rights and well-being of persons with disabilities.

More than 1,000 dancers moved in unison to a mix of Filipino cultural dances done in contemporary music while world-class performer Lea Salonga sang the Games' theme song entitled "The Power of my Dream."

Hostilities start today in chess at the Century Park Sheraton Hotel, swimming at the Rizal Memorial pool and athletics, with 21 finals on tap, at the Rizal Memorial Track Stadium.

Badminton starts tomorrow at the RMSC Badminton Hall, wheelchair basketball at the Emilio Aguinaldo College (EAC) Gymnasium, wheelchair tennis at the RMSC Tennis Courts and judo at the Rizal Memorial Coliseum.



MEMBERS of the Philippine team wave to the crowd during the opening parade of the 3rd Paragames at the Rizal Memorial Stadium. RYAN LIM

Granny Goose eyes solo 2nd

THERE'S NO REPLACING INJURED MAIN MAN JR Quiñahan, but Granny Goose has managed to stay afloat without the burly 6-foot-6 center.

The Tortillos shoot for solo second, again minus Quiñahan, when they clash against Toyota Otis in the PBL Heroes Cup at 4 p.m. today at the Letran Gym.

Forward Alfie Grijaldo has stepped up big time for the Tortillos, almost doubling his production to 13.5 points and 6.5 rebounds in the last two games. Coach Joe Lipa has also turned to Jett Latonio and Dennis Concha for additional firepower.

Harbour Centre is also hoping that returning point guard LA Tenorio would do wonders for the Portmasters when they battle the Far Eastern Insurers at 2 p.m.

Abby Santos will again man the paint as replacement for Quiñahan, who is still recuperating from a torn ligament.

Toyota Otis is expected to rely heavily on Fil-Am recruit Joe Devance as the Knights try to avenge their 62-54 loss to the Tortillos in the first round.

Just like the Knights, the cellar-dwelling Portmasters and Insurers are looking to get out of the rut.

The Portmasters, who absorbed their fifth straight loss, just couldn't get it together even with the presence of ace collegiate stars Joseph Yeo of La Salle, Marcy Arellano of University of the East and Kelvin dela Peña of Mapua.

Jay-Arr Estrada and Boyet Guerrero, meanwhile, will try to lead the Insurers back to their winning form after Hapee-PCU ended their two-game run, 91-75, last Saturday. *Jasmine W. Payo*

STANDINGS	W	L
Magnolia	6	1
G. Goose	4	3
Rain/Shine	4	3
Montaña	4	3
Hapee-PCU	4	3
H. Centre	2	5
Toyota Otis	2	5
F. Eastern Ins.	2	5

GAMES TODAY

(Letran Gym)

2 p.m.—Far Eastern Insurance vs Harbour Centre

4 p.m.—Toyota Otis vs Granny Goose

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ENTERTAINMENT

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OSANG shows up for interview.

CHIZ is director's dream housemate.

Next on 'Big Brother'?

By Nini Valera

CONTROVERSIAL BOLD ACtress and former television talk show host Rosanna Roces seems to be eyeing a housemate slot in "Pinoy Big Brother—Celebrity Edition," which starts airing on Feb. 4 next year.

"PBB" director Lauren Dyogi told INQUIRER Entertainment in an exclusive interview on

NEXT/ A2-2

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The best of 2005

NEW YORK—GEORGE CLOONEY'S McCarthy-era drama "Good Night, and Good Luck" was named Best Film of 2005 by the National Board of Review on Monday in the latest pre-Oscar award that helps narrow the field for the big prize.

Set in the 1950s and filmed in black and white, the film directed by Clooney chronicles the real-life conflict between television newsman Edward R. Murrow and Sen. Joseph McCarthy.

Philip Seymour Hoffman was named Best Actor for the title role of "Capote," and "Desperate Housewives" star Felicity Huffman was named Best Actress for playing a transgender character in the low-budget "Transamerica."

GEORGE Clooney

The NBR—whose members include film professionals, educators, students and historians—also listed its 10 best films. The list included independents such as "Brokeback Mountain," "Crash" and "Capote," as well as "A History of Violence," the political thriller "Syriana" and big studio productions "Walk the Line" and "Memoirs of a Geisha." Veteran directors Steven Spielberg and Woody Allen made the list for "Munich" and "Match Point," respectively.

Ang Lee was named Best Director for the gay cowboy love story "Brokeback Mountain," which already won best film from the Los Angeles Film Critics Association on Saturday. "Paradise Now," about Palestinian suicide bombers, was named Best Foreign-Language Film and "March of the Penguins" was Best Documentary.

The awards will be presented on Jan. 10.

Reuters

AMY Perez has "expressed interest"

Next on PBB

From page A2-1

Tuesday that Roces was the first celebrity to show up for an interview with the producers.

But Dyogi said there is no final list yet.

The mix of housemates is crucial to the success of "PBB," as all the drama in the reality TV series is provided by conflicts arising from the difference in the participants' personalities.

"We have to talk to more celebrities," Dyogi said, and admitted, "Who I really want [in there] is Congressman Francis Escudero."

The choice for the celebrity edition is not limited to *artistas*, he explained. The invitation is being extended as well to other media personalities, like models, athletes, politicians and journalists.

So far, according to PBB business unit manager Linggit Tan, three other celebrities have indicated interest—Eula Valdez, Amy Perez, and Jenny Hernandez.

Meanwhile, Dyogi reported, Last Saturday's "PBB Big Night" at the Clark Expo stadium in Pampanga boosted ABS-CBN ratings. "We averaged a high of 39 percent during the three-and-a-half hour run of the episode, and peaked at 46 percent," Dyogi revealed, noting that for the first time in a long while, ABS-CBN won the ratings game over GMA 7.

Tan said the other ABS-CBN shows aired before the "PBB" finals—"ETK," "Ngiiinig," "Little Big Star," "Quizon Avenue," "TV Patrol World," and "Magandang Gabi, Bayan"—also rated unusually high that night.

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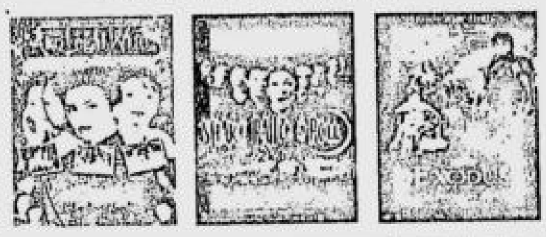

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Dec. 20 • Megamall • Cinema 3

KUTOB
Dec. 20 • The Podium • Cinema 2

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Dec. 21 • The Podium • Cinema 2

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2 KING KONG 12:50FS/01:20MF/05:00 08:10LFS/08:40LMF/11:50END

MEGAMALL
1 EXERCISM OF EMILY ROSE 11:45FS/11:30MF/01:55 04:00LFS/04:20LMF/06:25END KING KONG 7:30LMF/10:40END

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2 KING KONG 12:00FS/12:10MF/03:35 06:43LFS/07:00LMF/10:05END
3 KING KONG 12:50FS/01:10MF/04:35 07:43LFS/08:00LMF/11:05END

METRO MANILA

SM MEGAMALL
1 EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE
2 MERRY CHRISTMAS
3 THE FOG
4 KING KONG
5 KING KONG
6 KING KONG
7 ANG PAGDADALAGA NI MAXIMO OLIVEROS
8 KING KONG
9 KING KONG
10 KING KONG
11 HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIRE
12 THE MAN

SM CITY STA. MESA
1 KING KONG
2 KING KONG
3 KING KONG
4 HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIRE
5 THE FOG
6 JUST LIKE HEAVEN
7 MERRY CHRISTMAS
8 THE MAN
9 ANG PAGDADALAGA NI MAXIMO OLIVEROS
10 EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE

SM CITY BICUTAN
1 KING KONG
2 KING KONG
3 THE MAN
4 KING KONG

SM VALENZUELA NOW OPEN
1 KING KONG
2 KING KONG
3 EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE
4 THE FOG

SM CITY FAIRVIEW
1 THE MYTH
2 CHICKEN LITTLE
3 EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE
4 KING KONG
5 HARI NG SABLAY
6 THE FOG
7 KING KONG
8 KING KONG
9 HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIRE
10 ANG PAGDADALAGA NI MAXIMO OLIVEROS
11 JUST LIKE HEAVEN
12 THE MAN

SM CITY SOUTHMALL
1 KING KONG
2 HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIRE
3 KING KONG
4 KING KONG
5 JUST LIKE HEAVEN
6 CHICKEN LITTLE
7 THE MAN
8 THE FOG
9 EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE
10 HARI NG SABLAY

SM SUPERCENTER SUCAT
1 THE MAN
2 KING KONG
3 KING KONG
4 KING KONG

SM CITY NORTH EDSA
1 KING KONG
2 KING KONG
3 KING KONG
4 THE MAN
5 HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIRE
6 THE FOG
7 KING KONG
8 MERRY CHRISTMAS

SM CITY MANILA
1 KING KONG
2 KING KONG
3 THE FOG
4 KING KONG
5 HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIRE
6 KING KONG
7 EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE
8 ANG PAGDADALAGA NI MAXIMO OLIVEROS
9 KING KONG
10 KING KONG
11 THE MYTH
12 THE MAN

SM SAN LAZARO
1 KING KONG
2 THE FOG
3 KING KONG
4 THE MAN
5 ANG PAGDADALAGA NI MAXIMO OLIVEROS
6 KING KONG

LUZON

SM CITY PAMPANGA
1 KING KONG
2 KING KONG
3 KING KONG
4 EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE
5 HARI NG SABLAY
6 KING KONG

SM CITY BAGUIO
1 KING KONG
2 KING KONG
3 THE MAN
4 KING KONG

SM MOLINO NOW OPEN
1 KING KONG
2 KING KONG
3 THE FOG
4 IN HER SHOES

SM CITY BACOOR
1 THE MAN
2 THE FOG
3 KING KONG
4 KING KONG
5 KING KONG
6 JUST LIKE HEAVEN
7 KING KONG
8 HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIRE

SM CITY MARILAO
1 KING KONG
2 JUST LIKE HEAVEN
3 AN UNFINISHED LIFE
4 KING KONG

SM CITY DASMARIÑAS
1 KING KONG
2 EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE
3 KING KONG
4 KING KONG

SM CITY LUCENA
1 KING KONG
2 KING KONG
3 AN UNFINISHED LIFE
4 EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE

SM CITY BATANGAS
1 KING KONG
2 KING KONG
3 EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE
4 ANG PAGDADALAGA NI MAXIMO OLIVEROS

VISAYAS AND MINDANAO

SM CITY CEBU
KING KONG
KING KONG
3 KING KONG
4 HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIRE
5 THE MYTH
6 THE FOG
KING KONG
8 KING KONG

SM CITY ILOILO
1 JUST LIKE HEAVEN
2 RESERVED
3 KING KONG
4 KING KONG
5 KING KONG
6 ANG PAGDADALAGA NI MAXIMO OLIVEROS
7 RESERVED
8 THE FOG

SM CITY DAVAO
1 KING KONG
2 KING KONG
3 ANG PAGDADALAGA NI MAXIMO OLIVEROS
4 THE FOG
5 KING KONG
6 KING KONG

SM CITY CAGAYAN DE ORO
1 KING KONG
2 KING KONG
3 AN UNFINISHED LIFE
4 KING KONG

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3 (DOLBY) CHICKEN LITTLE GP
4 (DOLBY) KING KONG PG13
PREMIERE
(DOLBY) KING KONG PG13

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2 (SDDS) KING KONG
3 (DTS) KING KONG
4 GOLD (DTS) THE FOG
5 GOLD (DOLBY) KING KONG
6 GOLD (SDDS) KING KONG
7 GOLD (DOLBY) JUST LIKE HEAVEN
8 EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE
9 THE MYTH
10 HARRY POTTER-4

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3 (DOLBY) KING KONG
4 (DOLBY) KING KONG

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Waltermart Center, Chino Roces Ave. cor. Antonio Arnaiz Pio del Pilar, Makati City
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2 KING KONG
3 KING KONG
4 KING KONG

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4 THE FOG
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4 (DTS) KING KONG

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4 KING KONG

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3 KING KONG

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Two 'deathless' show biz icons remembered

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

LAST SEPTEMBER, JAMES Dean's fans observed the 50th anniversary of his untimely death in a car crash. Dean appeared on the big screen only a few times ("Rebel Without A Cause," "East of Eden," "Giant"), but his screen persona was so dynamic and involving that he remains a vital film icon to this day.

What has made Dean's screen persona remain compelling through half a century? First, his youth. He was just starting to peak as a major actor and film star when he died, and that tends to leave an indelible impression on film fans.

It's tragic, such a waste, so terribly unfair—almost like unrequited love. Not being able to savor Dean's talents for a lifetime, fans hold him in particularly ardent esteem, and in sad recollection.

Another major factor is Dean's emergence as a representation of the pain, passion and anger of teenage angst, so intensely vivified in his title role in "Rebel Without A Cause."

There's also the abiding enigma of Dean's sensuality—or, more specifically, his sexuality.

Women adore him, but the gay community has also claimed him as one of its own, due to his being linked to **Sal Mineo** and **Rock Hudson**.

His closest friends insist that Dean liked women, and a former girlfriend recently seconded the motion on cable TV. But the rumors persist, even after five decades, so the continuing controversy has helped keep Dean in his fans' consciousness.

Finally, there's Dean's major talent. Along with **Marlon Brando**, he revolutionized film acting, practically forcing it to shift from elegant classicism to raw realism.

Aside from this new acting style, Dean was simply a powerful, insightful actor who filled the screen with his intensity and charisma. No wonder his stellar luster hasn't dimmed after all these decades!

Still on the topic of "deathless" icons, **John Lennon**'s death 25 years ago was also marked recently by his fans. Gunned down by a mentally disturbed assassin, Lennon was at the peak of his songwriting and performing talents when he was so brutally killed, his fans' grief has bridged the quarter-century.

In Lennon's case, however, the bittersweet appeal isn't youthful verve, but has a more mature significance. This is due to the fact that Lennon has become an icon, not just of the musical world, but also of the peace movement.

With signature anthems like "Imagine," Lennon gave a voice to many people's lofty aspirations for the world to rise above hunger, strife and discrimination.

So, his untimely passing is mourned not just by his show biz fans, but also by many other people who are grateful for his life—and freedom-affirming songs—and lifestyle.

'The Family Stones'

The hit comedy, "The Family Stone," stars **Sarah Jessica Parker** as Meredith, an uptight New Yorker who goes on a Christmas visit to her boyfriend's (**Dermot Mulroney**) quirky family.

Alas, the family Stone isn't welcoming at all, so Meredith has her hands full trying to make her boyfriend's family like her. The fact that all of this comic nastiness takes place during the Yuletide season gives the movie's humor its unique edge.

Movies on TV

On HBO, today at 8:10 a.m., "Big Fish." 12 noon, "21 Grams." 9 p.m., "The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King." 12:15 a.m., "Angels in America, Chapter 3: The Messenger." 1:15 a.m., "Chapter 4: Stop Moving."

Tomorrow at 6 a.m., "The Matrix Revolutions." 11:15 p.m., "Angels in America, Chapter 5: Beyond Nelly." Chapter 6: Heaven, I'm In Heaven." 3 a.m., "Undefeated."

On Cinemax, today at 6:30 a.m., "Ironweed." 3:15 p.m., "All the President's Men." Tomorrow at 6 a.m., "The Naked Jungle." 7 p.m., "Philadelphia."

'Shariff Kabungsuan'

From today till Dec. 19, Cotabato City's Shariff Kabungsuan festival unreels, recalling the spread of Islam in Mindanao through the Arab missionary who landed at the mouth of Rio Grande de Mindanao in the 11th century. Features include SK trade fairs, battle of the bands, Mindanao Business fora, cultural presentations, street dancing competition, *malong* fashion showcase, and a *kanduli* thanksgiving buffet. The festival is being presented by Cotabato's Tourism Council, City government and Ayo Gunting's mass media group.

A PHOTO of John Lennon and a peace sign made of candles sit on the pavement near the music icon's star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame during a gathering of fans and supporters last week. It was the 25th anniversary of his death. Lennon was shot outside his apartment in New York City.

REUTERS

MICHELLE Yeoh and Ziyi Zhang are twin delights.

'Rapturous, vivid, lush'

'Memoirs of a Geisha' transports the viewer to another world

REVIEW

NEW YORK—WHEN she's still a little girl, washing clothes and running errands as a servant for the glamorous women of a Kyoto geisha house, the plucky heroine of "Memoirs of a Geisha" gets an important bit of advice:

"If she's not properly dressed," her hard-driving boss tells her, "she is not a true geisha."

It seems everyone involved with the movie was paying attention to those words, as well. An obsession with appearance and detail permeates every second of "Memoirs of a Geisha," to breathtaking effect. Words like "vivid" and "lush" don't do it justice; you truly feel as if you've been transported to another world.

In bringing Arthur Golden's best-selling, faux-insider novel to the screen, director Rob Marshall has created a fluid, rapturous work—not surprising from the man who razzle-dazzled us with the Oscar-winning "Chicago."

If you don't bother to strip away the layers of makeup and silk, you'll be thoroughly mesmerized. But beyond the rich fabrics, elaborate set design and romantic John Williams score—with cello solos from Yo-Yo Ma and violin solos from Itzhak Perlman—there's little depth.

Works of art

Ziyi Zhang's scrappy young Chiyo—renamed Sayuri once she becomes a geisha—learns from her mentor Mameha (Michelle Yeoh) that geishas are not courtesans and not wives, but living, breathing works of art trained to elegantly entertain. And Mameha warns her that they're certainly not allowed to fall in love—which Sayuri did long ago, with the Chairman (Ken Watanabe).

But we never truly feel Sayuri's pain—the sense of being trapped in a life she was sold into—because she'd long dreamed of the glamorous trappings, and she thrives as a geisha. Marshall glosses over her anguish in favor of breathy voiceover and stylized aesthetics.

Naturally, writers Robin Swicord and Doug Wright had to condense Golden's book, which likely will trouble purists. There's also the raging debate over the casting of non-Japanese actresses in the lead roles—a who's-who of ravishing Asian superstars to rival Wong Kar-wai's "2046," including Zhang and Gong Li (who are Chinese) and Yeoh (who's Malaysian and Chinese).

None of this matters if you approach the film purely as escapist entertainment. In that regard, it's more than satisfying.

Having a blast

As Sayuri, the über-geisha in training during pre-World War II Japan, Zhang gets to strut and flirt and pout, and she does it radiantly. The obligatory montage that highlights her transformation from orphaned maid to outrageous diva is cliched but thrillingly staged, as she learns how to walk, dance and play music like the charming companions of the time.

"You are a magnificent geisha," the tranquil, wise Mameha assures her in the warm tones of a self-help guru.

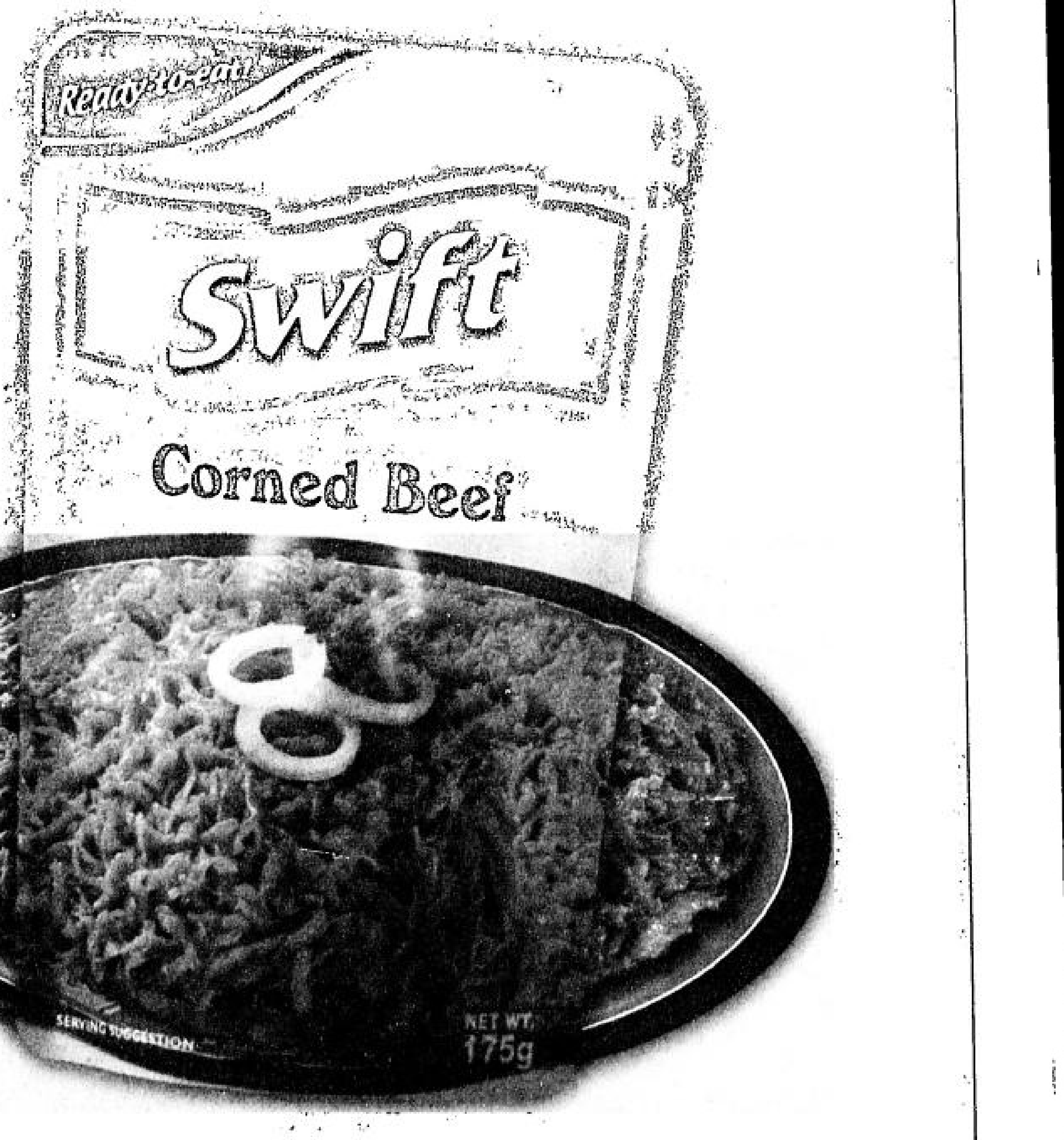
And it's true—so much so that she threatens to usurp Gong's Hatsumomo, another prominent geisha and Mameha's rival.

Gong, the longtime favorite of Chinese director Zhang Yimou in her first English-language role, clearly had a blast vamping it up. She's a tempest of treachery, insecurity and manipulation.

While Sayuri is being pitted against her one-time best friend, Hatsumomo's protegé Pumpkin (Youki Kudoh, who actually is Japanese), she secretly hopes to attract the interest of the Chairman. She has been pining for him ever since he comforted her as a child crying alone on a footbridge.

But as she makes her much-anticipated debut before a crowded audience—a performance that's part coming-out party, part Vegas showgirl routine—Sayuri draws the interest of every man in the room. Her act is a swirl of blue lighting, fake snow and impossibly high platform flip-flops, one that will surely send drag queens scurrying to their mirrors to hone their own routines—regardless of their ethnic origin. *Christy Lemire, AP*

Swift **O**n **P**late



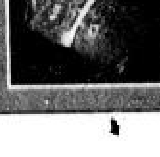
Ang batayan ng masarap na kainan.

Initin lamang ng 3 minuto, buksan at ihain, lasap mo na agad ang linamnam ng **Swift Corned Beef**, nasa school, opisina o biyahe ka man. Kaya kung hanap mo ang sarap na walang katapat, mag-**Swift Corned Beef** na!

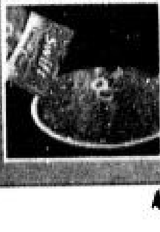
Beef sarap in a snap!

THREE STEPS TO BEEF SARAP:

STEP 1
Immerse pouch in hot water for 3 minutes.



STEP 2
Tear open pouch of Swift Corned Beef.



STEP 3
Pour contents of pouch on a plate.

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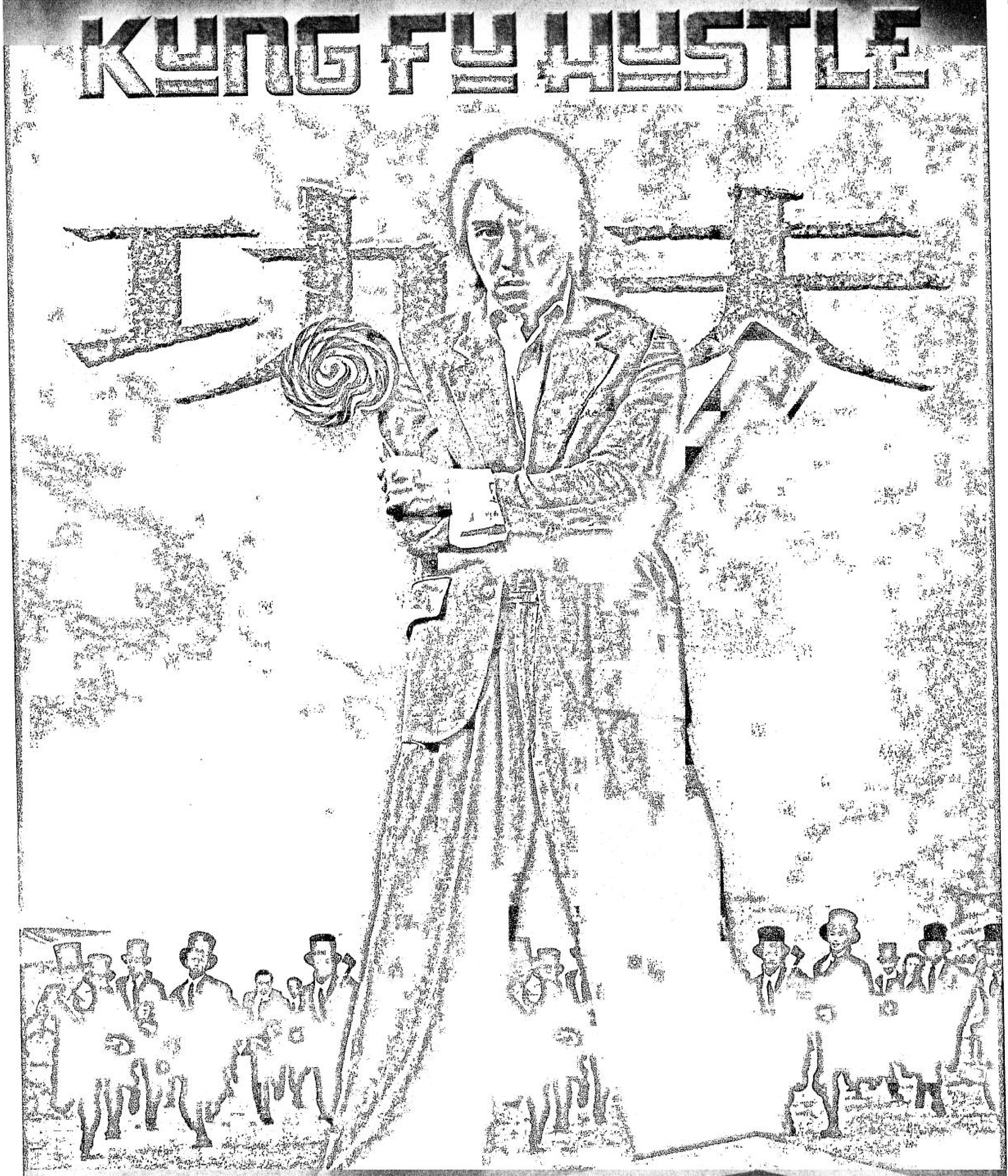

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4 KING KONG
5 KING KONG
6 JUST LIKE HEAVEN
7 THE EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE
8 THE FOG
9 IN HER SHOES
10 HARRY POTTER & the GOBLET of FIRE

ERMITA
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1 KIN GKONG
2 THE FOG
3 JUST LIKE HEAVEN
4 IN HER SHOES
5 HARRY POTTER & the GOBLET of FIRE
6 KING KONG
7 KING KONG

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7 JUST LIKE HEAVEN
8 HARRY POTTER & the GOBLET of FIRE

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3 JUST LIKE HEAVEN
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5 THE FOG
6 KING KONG

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3 THE FOG
4 JUST LIKE HEAVEN

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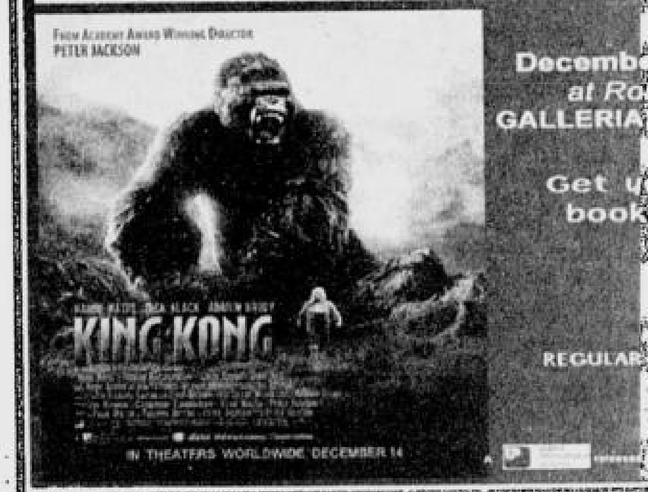
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3 KING KONG
4 THE EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE
5 HARRY POTTER & the GOBLET of FIRE

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3 THE EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE
4 THE FOG

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5 KING KONG
6 KING KONG

BACOLOD
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(034) [illegible]

1 KING KONG
2 THE FOG
3 KING KONG
4 KING KONG
5 HARRY POTTER & the GOBLET of FIRE
6 THE MYTH

ILOILO
(033) [illegible]

1 KING KONG
2 THE FOG
3 JUST LIKE HEAVEN
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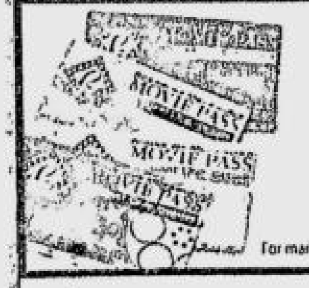
5 KING KONG
6 THE MYTH



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G4	1 JUST LIKE HEAVEN	2 HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIRE	3 THX KINGKONG GUARANTEED SEATS	
	4 KISS KISS BANG BANG	5 CHICKEN LITTLE	6 KINGKONG	7 IN HER SHOES
GB1	1 ANG PAGDADALAGA NI MAXIMO OLIVEROS	2 KINGKONG		
GB3	1 THX KINGKONG GUARANTEED SEATS	2 THX KINGKONG GUARANTEED SEATS		
	3 IN HER SHOES GUARANTEED SEATS	4 KISS KISS BANG BANG GUARANTEED SEATS	5 JUST LIKE HEAVEN GUARANTEED SEATS	
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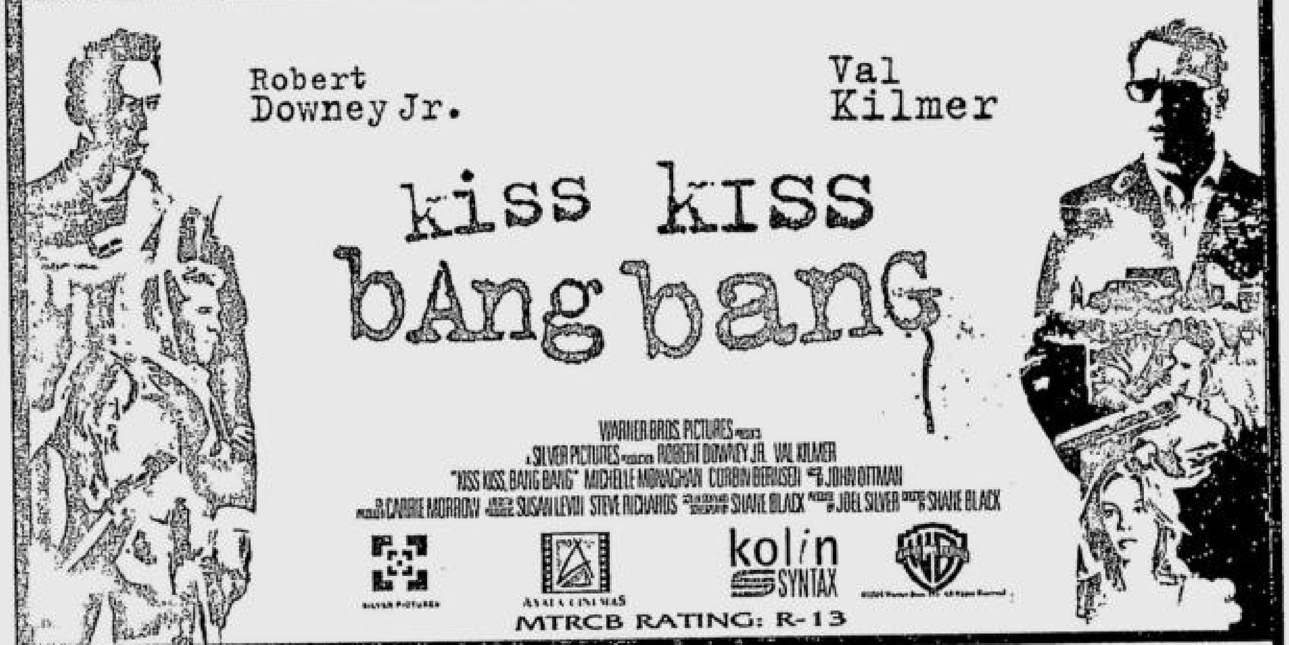
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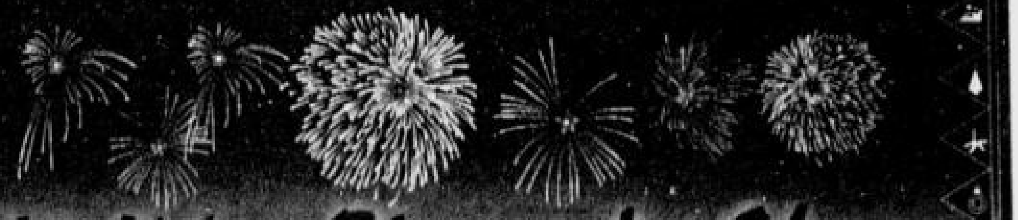

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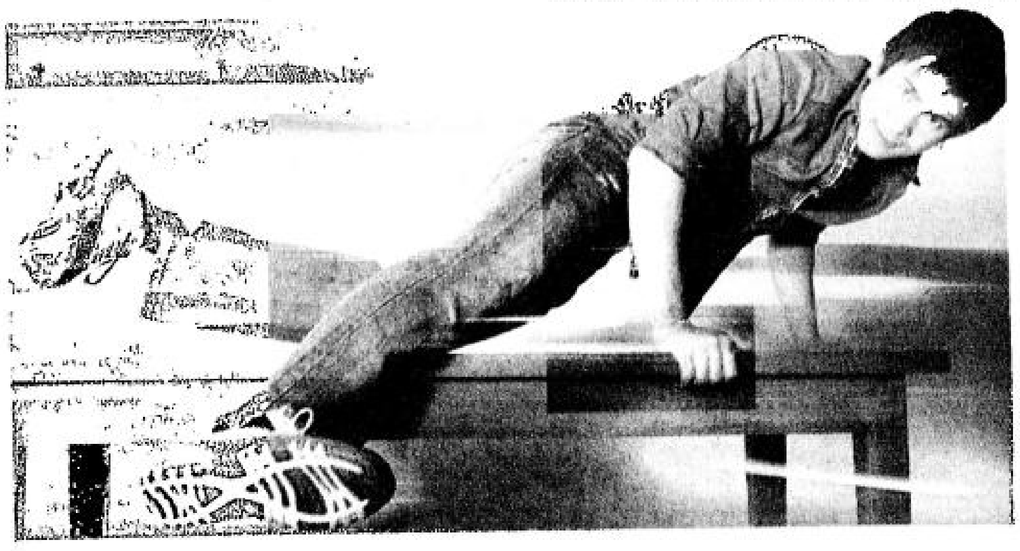

IN HIS SHOES Sam Milby had no clue that life after "Big Brother" would be so hectic. Evicted after 49 days, the good-looking favorite housemate walked out of the show and straight into a bed of contracts for shows and endorsements, the latest of which is for GBX sports shoes. He may even try his hand at recording, Sam says.

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KING KONG PG13 1:40,5:10,8:40	KING KONG PG13 3:10,6:40,10:10	KING KONG PG13 12:20,3:50,7:20
KING KONG PG13 2:25,5:55,9:25	JUST LIKE HEAVEN GP 1:10,3:15,5:20,7:25,9:30	KING KONG PG13 1:00,4:30,8:00

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SHANG CINEPLEX
① KING KONG MTRCB PG-13 12.30, 4:15, 8.00 PM
② KING KONG MTRCB PG-13 1.30, 5.15, 9.00 PM
③ KING KONG MTRBC PG-13 10.45, 2:30, 6:15, 10.00 PM
④ CHICKEN LITTLE MTRCB GP 1:20, 3:20, 5:20, 7.20, 9:20pm
PREMIERE THEATRE KING KONG MTRCB PG-13 2.00, 5.45 9.30 PM
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GLOBE PLATINUM P249 / P299
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2:25 / 3:00 / 3:35 / 4:10 / 4:45
6:00 / 6:35 / 7:10 / 8:25 / 9:35 / 10:10
JUST LIKE HEAVEN
12:10 / 2:10 / 4:10 / 6:10
MERRY CHRISTMAS
6:40 / 9:30
GLOBE PLATINUM CINEMA
KING KONG
1:50 / 5:25 / 9:00
CHICKEN LITTLE
12:30 / 3:30 / 7:40
THE FOG
12:20 / 2:40 / 5:00 / 7:20 / 9:40
...MAXIMO OLIVEROS
12:50 / 3:00 / 5:10 / 7:20 / 9:30

ALI MALL CINEMAS
① KING KONG 12:30 / 4:05 / 7:40
② THE MYTH 12:45 / 3:15 / 5:45 / 8:20
③ HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET 12:00 R4 / 2:00 / 5:00 / 8:00
④ HARI NG SABLAY 12:30 / 3:00 / 5:30 / 8:00
⑤ IN HER SHOES 12:30 / 3:10 / 5:50 / 8:30
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ROUNDUP

Best celebrity dog owner

NEW YORK—When it comes to celebrity dog-parenting skills, Joss Stone is tops and Paris Hilton is the worst, according to an online poll of readers of two dog magazines.

Stone, who has a poodle named Dusty Springfield, volunteered for the North Shore Animal League America after seeing images of pets stranded in the aftermath of hurricanes Katrina and Wilma, said The New York Dog and The Hollywood Dog magazines, which conducted the poll.

The 18-year-old British singer also recorded a public service announcement seeking support for homeless pets of the US Gulf Coast.

The poll was conducted over a three-month period and results were released Friday. *AP*

Prince back with a major

NEW YORK—Prince, who has put out most of his music on his own record label over the past decade, is aligning himself with a major label once again. The 47-year-old superstar has signed a deal with Universal Records to release his upcoming album, "3121," early next year.

Prince had a similar deal with Columbia Records in 2003; that label distributed his acclaimed comeback album, "Musicology," for NPG Records, Prince's label. *AP*

Martha back on TV

NEW YORK—With the renewal of her daytime show, "Martha," for a second season, Martha Stewart is making a post-prison television comeback.

NBC Universal Domestic Television said Monday that Stewart's home-oriented talk show, set to air again next fall, had improved the time-slot ratings in 17 of the top 20 US markets.

NBC earlier said that Stewart's prime-time turn as the boardroom boss in "The Apprentice," a spin-off from the Donald Trump series, would be short-lived. Stewart's edition ends when the current game is over.

"The Apprentice" and "Martha" were Stewart's first television projects after five months in prison, the result of lying to the government about a stock sale. *AP*

How Martin, Pops have kept the music playing

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Ann Carvajal

POPS FERNANDEZ AND I GO A LONG way back. That's why her birthday is as significant to me as my own. If she hadn't been born, my life would have been half-empty. We don't see or talk to each other everyday but we're sure that we are forever in each other's corner.

During her intimate birthday bash at Quisine last Friday, it felt so good to "rebond" with Pipay. Only her closest friends in and out of show biz were at the party thrown for her by another good friend, Gretchen Barretto. It wasn't just a birthday celebration but also a rekindling of friendships that have withstood changes and intrigues. Also at the party were Martin Nievera (her best friend, first and foremost), Liezl and Alyanna Martinez, Joyce Jimenez, Rowell and Randy Santiago, Rudy Fernandez, John Lapus, Raymund Isaac and Tim Yap among others.

Her rumored beau, Jomari Yllana, was nowhere in sight. When I teased Pipay about Jom, she just giggled "You *talaga! Tanungin pa ba ako?*" Are they or aren't they? That's not for me to say. But the twinkle in Pipay's eyes is more than enough indication that her heart is all-smiles again. The magic's gone when you know where it's coming from. So as a birthday gift to Pipay, let's leave the Jom mystique as it is.

I enjoyed chatting with Gretchen. She had her equally beautiful daughter Dominique in tow. Of course the love of her life, Tonyboy, was present. Theirs is such a sweet and serene kind of love. Even when they were seated at separate tables, you could feel them exchange loving glances across the room. Gretch leads a charmed life but she hasn't lost sight of her struggling years in show biz. She readily agreed to pose for the billboards of Marcella (owned by our common friend, Beth Co) gratis et amore for old time's sake. "Beth provided me with all my accessories when I could not afford to buy my own so I'm more than happy to be her image model again," Gretch said. "Anything for an old friend."

Daboy has put the Japan brouhaha behind him, it was clear as he partied on. True to form, John Lapus made everybody laugh when he announced that Pipay's party was super "sosi" 'cause it was the first time he tasted of caviar. Joyce is on vacation from studies in Australia. My *kumareng* Liezl and *hijada* Alyanna are beginning to look a lot like sisters instead of mother and daughter.

Martin gamely serenaded Pops and they also did a duet. It was such a joy to see them truly at peace with each other. Nothing show biz. They are back to where they started from—friendship, this time with more candor and honesty. Martin kidded Pops, "What song should I sing to you tonight? Hmm... Sexual Healing?" They sang "How Do You Keep the Music Playing?" And you could tell that they have found the answer. Martin's gift to Pops was a video ipod. He told me that it's the one with the largest memory capacity. But for sure it's still not enough to store the wealth of all their memories.

Happy, happy birthday, my beloved Pipay!

Just asking

Although former Pinoy Big Brother Housemate, Uma has vehemently denied that he's gay, what's this I hear from the staff member of an avant garde mag that Uma once admitted that he was? This happened during the screen test for a defunct TV show. In fact, the magazine staffer even has a video of Uma's revelation. Perhaps he just said that in jest. But aren't jokes half-meant?

A funny thought crossed my mind. Since lovers Angel Locsin and Oyo Boy Sotto both wore a harness for their flying scenes in their separate entries to the Metro Manila Filmfest ("Mulawin" and "Enteng Kabisote 2"), wouldn't it be cute if, on the day of the parade, they would fly from each of their movie's floats and meet mid-air to delight the crowd?

Did you know that socialite/ *mi amiga* Alana Lopez Montelibano and the ex-lover of Plinky Recto are both from Bacolod? We were all together last Saturday. Since I'm an Ilongga at heart, I got a kick out of brushing up on my Ilonggo with them. Yup we talked about Alana's case versus Aiko Melendez, and his case against Plinky. But I'm not at liberty to divulge the details yet. We were so caught up in our Ilonggo chatter that I almost forgot: they're two of the most controversial personalities in show biz at the moment.

Piano sensation

Tomorrow, piano music will fill the Philippine International Convention Center as crossover artist performs there in a return engagement. Maksim has bridged the gap between generations and musical genres. Now, even young people who know nothing about classical piano music have taken notice. His performances are always high on drama, with video screens and spectacular lights and laser shows.

Maksim recently released his latest CD, "A New World." For tickets to the show, call 687-1125.

Greatest hits

Just in time for Christmas, Rivermaya has released the much-awaited "Greatest Hits 2006: The Ultimate Collection." The album features the hit song "Posible" (theme of the recent SEA games), plus 15 timeless tracks, including "Liwanag sa Dilim," "Umaaraw, Umuulan," "Balisong" and Manny Pacquiao's fave fight song "Alab ng Puso."

Guide to survival

Hmm ... Wonder why some men watch 'F'? Because they can't find a show for men! But the guys are back and, this season, Scribbleworks Productions Inc. makes sure "Men's Room" is better than ever. New co-hosts—the sporty Rovilson Fernandez and the funny and "adorable" Mike Unson—join RJ Ledesma.

The show tackles everything about being a guy—fashion, grooming, gadgets, sports, cars, accessories, gimmick spots in the metro and, of course, beautiful girls!

Watch season 4 of "Men's Room" in a new time slot, Wednesdays, 11:30 p.m. on Studio 23.

(E-mail wateringholeshangrila@yahoo.com.)

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'05 budget gap seen at ₱161B

Nearly ₱20B below ceiling

By Michelle V. Remo

THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT'S BUDGET DEFICIT FOR 2005 IS estimated to hit about P161 billion based on latest estimates by the Development Budget Coordination Committee (DBCC), or nearly P20 billion lower than the P180-billion ceiling for the year.

For the 10 months to October, the government has managed to keep its deficit way below the ceiling set for the period due to higher-than-programmed collection of non-tax revenues and by keeping expenditures below target.

The deficit for the January-to-October period stood at P115.5 billion, or P40.5 billion lower than the program for the first 10 months of the year.

The P40.5-billion over-performance for the 10-month period is seen to be trimmed down to only about P20 billion by December as the government is expected to increase its spending for the last two months of the year following some belt-tightening in the previous months.

Earlier estimates showed that the deficit for the full year could hit a low of P140 billion or a high of P170 billion, but officials said the former was a very optimistic projection that reflected maintenance until December of the over-performance recorded as of October.

According to a source from the DBCC, an interagency body tasked with setting the government's economic policies and targets, the projected full-year deficit was based on preliminary revenue collection by the Bureau of Internal Revenue and the Bureau of Customs.

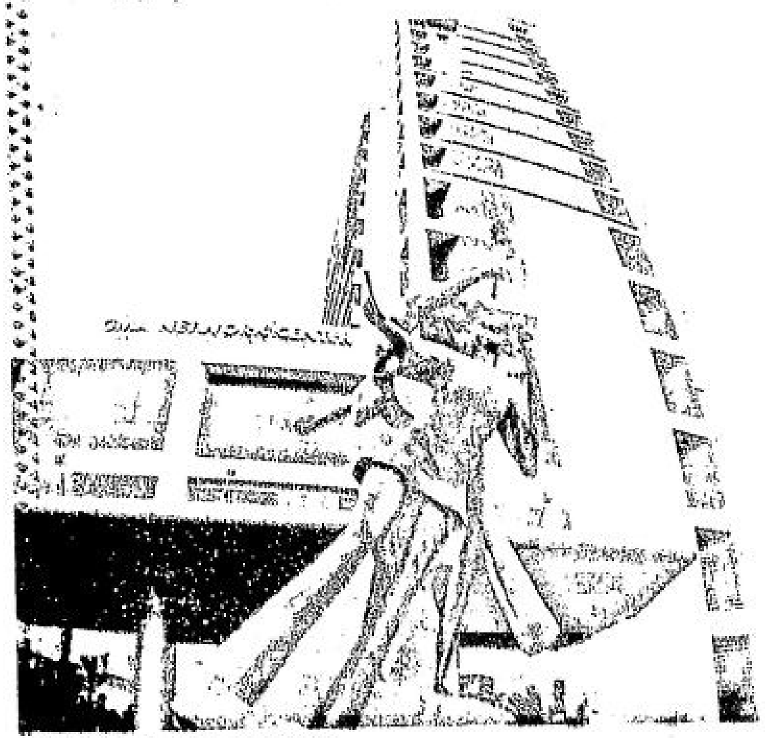
The DBCC said that as of Dec. 1 computations, tax collection for November stood at P48.1 billion. The figure was still below the revenue agency's P50.2-billion goal for November, but the BIR has given a commitment to hit its target.

The BOC earlier reported that based on preliminary computations, it has already surpassed its P13.029-billion collection target for November.

The BIR and the BOC both suffered huge revenue collection shortfalls in the January-to-October period at P8.8 billion and P8.9 billion, respectively, but the BOC expressed optimism it would still be able to meet its full-year target because of an estimated P16 billion to P17 billion worth of collectibles from state-owned companies.

The confidence of meeting the BOC target and the likelihood that the BIR would significantly trim down its collection shortfall as of October were partly attributed to a recently approved policy that relaxed the rules on

'05 BUDGET/ B2



GMA 7 head office along Edsa

GMA 7 seen cutting IPO size to 20%

By Clarissa S. Batino

GMA NETWORK INC. IS LIKELY to reduce the size of its initial public offering to about 20 percent of the company's outstanding shares and expects to conduct the IPO by the second quarter of 2006, its top official said.

"From a range of 20 to 30 percent, we are planning to settle for the lower end, which is 20 percent, to be sold to the public next year," GMA 7 president Felipe Gozon said in an interview.

Selling 20 percent would generate about P6 billion. This is computed on the network's conservative market value of about P30 billion.

A Philippine Depository Receipt, a mechanism to allow foreign shareholders to own shares in a local media company (which is restricted to non-Filipinos), is also being considered as part of the public offering, according to Gozon.

"It depends on what the appetite will be among local investors. We are considering a PDR component," Gozon said.

Gozon said the three founding families of GMA 7 should be able to retain a substantial stake to reap the benefits of their investments.

Aside from Gozon, GMA 7 is controlled by the families of Menardo Jimenez and Jaime Duavit.

"While we want the original investors to continue sharing in the upside, we also want the public to own something of really great value," Gozon said.

GMA 7's transformation is considered phenomenal in the indus-

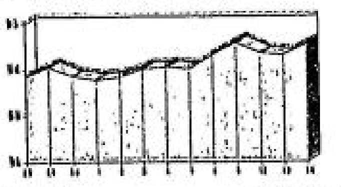
GMA 7/ B2

WHAT'S INSIDE

BREAKTIME What's up, bok? /B5
DBP starts P10-B tier 2 offering /B3
Naia-3 completion work seen to start in Q1 /B8

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



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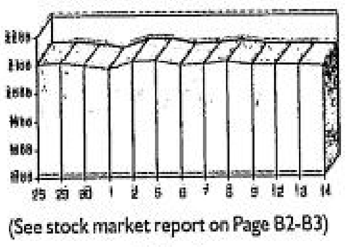
₱ 53.45 = $1
As of 5 p.m., Dec. 14, 2005

¥ 118.74 = $1
As of 5 p.m., Dec. 14, 2005

GOLD: $522.00-522.50
per ounce Hong Kong, Dec. 13, 2005

STOCK MARKET

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B2-B3)

Shares end flat

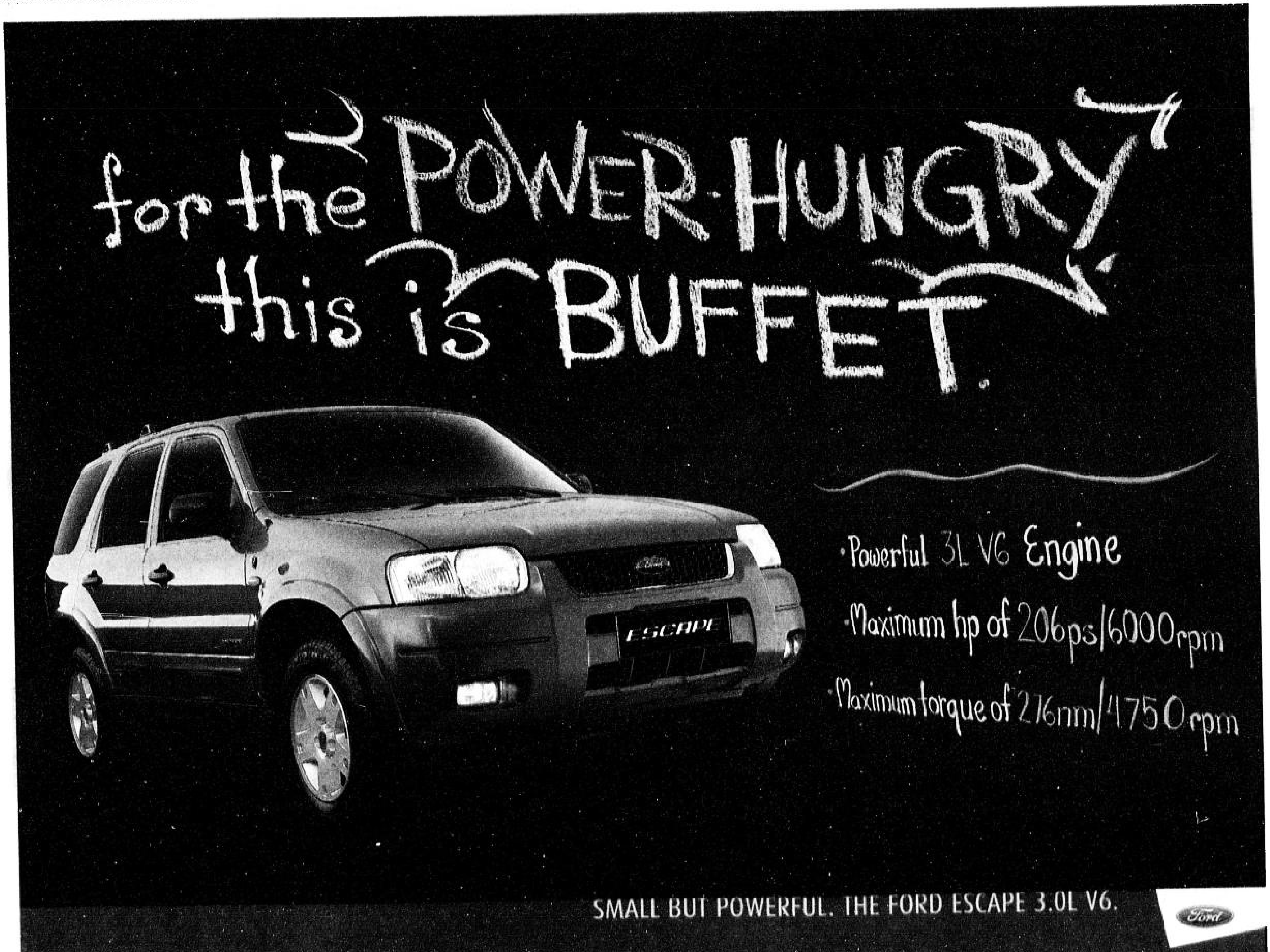
SHARES ENDED FLAT FOR THE third straight session yesterday as investors awaited the central bank's last monthly rate setting meeting for the year scheduled for today, traders said.

The benchmark 30-company Philippine Stock Exchange Index fell 1.79 points, or 0.1 percent, to 2,097.25, after shedding 0.1 percent Tuesday. On Monday, the index was up 0.1 percent.

"The market is on a wait-and-see ahead of tomorrow's central bank policy meeting," said investment analyst Mark Alan Canizares of Citiseconline.com.

There is speculation in the market that the central bank may increase its key overnight rates by 25 basis points during the policy meeting, after the US Federal Reserve raised

SHARES/ B2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PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of December 14, 2005)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	32.5	32.5	32.5	32.5	163,900
Bank of the Phil. Islands	56	57.5	56	56.5	409,200
China Banking Corp.	605	605	605	605	960
Citystate Savings Bank	17.75	17.75	17.75	17.75	300
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.62	0.62	0.62	0.62	350,000
Equitable Pci Bank Inc.	54.5	56	54.5	56	158,200
International Exch. Bank	21.25	21.25	21.25	21.25	99,700
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	32.5	33	32	33	1,198,300
Philippine National Bank	32	32	31.5	31.5	36,600
Philippine Trust Co.	50	50	50	50	20,000
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	13.75	14	13.75	14	21,000
Security Bank Corp.	32.5	32.5	32	32	112,800
Union Bank of the Phil.	30.5	30.5	30.5	30.5	9,100
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
First Abacus Financial	0.49	0.49	0.49	0.49	40,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	3120	3120	3120	3120	1,340
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.04	1.04	1.04	1.04	45,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	142	142	142	142	100
Sun Life Financial Inc.	2115	2130	2115	2130	140
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	13.5	13.75	13.5	13.75	9,300
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.89	0.91	0.89	0.91	280,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	750	750	745	750	16,460
Ipeople Inc.	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.9	10,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.047	0.048	0.047	0.048	2,700,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	1.68	1.72	1.68	1.72	120,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	3.45	3.5	3.35	3.35	2,380,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1795	1795	1795	1795	49,730
Ivantage Corp.	0.57	0.57	0.57	0.57	2,320,000
Philweb Corp.	0.015	0.016	0.015	0.016	140,900,000
POWER, ENERGY & OTHER UTILITIES					
Manila Electric Co. A	15.5	15.5	15.5	15.5	300
Manila Electric Co. B	24	24	24	24	135,000
Manila Water Co. Inc.	6.3	6.4	6.3	6.3	180,000
Petron Corp.	4.45	4.5	4.45	4.5	2,358,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	9.4	9.4	9.4	9.4	37,000
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	0.72	0.72	0.71	0.71	230,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	550,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	3.95	4.3	3.95	4.25	17,739,000
Republic Cement Corp.	0.75	0.76	0.75	0.76	100,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	22.75	22.75	22.75	22.75	20,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	43	43	42	42	77,900
Pancake House Inc.	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.6	1,000
RFM Corp.	0.71	0.72	0.71	0.72	340,000
Swift Food Inc.	0.225	0.225	0.22	0.22	120,000
San Miguel Corp. A	64	64	63.5	64	86,900
San Miguel Corp. B	87.5	87.5	87.5	87.5	59,500
Phil Tob Flue Cur & Redry	10	10	10	10	1,000
Universal Robina Corp.	18.25	18.25	18.25	18.25	90,000
Vitarich Corp.	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	1,230,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Alok-Big Wedge Co. Inc.	6	6	6	6	5,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.007	0.007	0.0065	0.007	16,000,000
Ayala Corp.	327.5	327.5	325	325	529,130
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.45	0.45	0.45	0.45	150,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	4.8	4.8	4.8	4.8	372,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.023	0.023	0.023	0.023	2,000,000
A. Soriano Corp.	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.1	250,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	13,000,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	0.87	0.88	0.86	0.88	1,000,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	1.14	1.16	1.14	1.16	6,978,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.195	0.195	0.195	0.195	100,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.32	0.33	0.32	0.33	9,910,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	3.1	3.1	3	3	1,531,000
Fil-Estate Corp.	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	30,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1.22	1.22	1.22	1.22	1,262,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	48	48.5	48	48.5	240,100
Ionics Inc.	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	3.5	3.5	3.45	3.5	347,000
Macroasia Corp.	1.5	1.5	1.48	1.48	170,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. B	0.016	0.016	0.016	0.016	1,000,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.26	1.26	1.24	1.26	1,543,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.35	0.35	0.34	0.34	1,650,000
Paxys Inc.	6	6	6	6	182,000
Polar Property Holdings	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.3	2,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	1.24	1.24	1.24	1.24	22,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.49	0.49	0.49	0.49	150,000
SM Investments Corp.	248	248	247	247	53,210
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.125	0.125	0.12	0.125	850,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	260,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Interphil Labs Inc. B	0.85	0.85	0.85	0.85	40,000
Metro Alliance Holdings	0.42	0.42	0.42	0.42	50,000
Prime Gaming Phils. Inc.	44	44	44	44	2,700
Pryce Corp.	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	250,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	1.02	1.02	0.98	0.98	3,910,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	30,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	1.44	1.44	1.44	1.44	264,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	300,000
OTHERS					
Centro Escolar University	8.9	8.9	8.9	8.9	15,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	9.8	9.9	9.7	9.8	7,989,000
Cityland Development Corp.	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	52,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	429,000
C&P Homes Inc.	0.4	2.55	0.4	2.34	6,300,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.215	0.215	0.215	0.215	600,000

STOCKS/-B3

CURRENCIES

December 14, 2005 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.837731	1.000000	53.6690
Japan	Yen	0.006985	0.008338	0.4475
United Kingdom	Pound	1.482366	1.769500	94.9673
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.108043	0.128971	6.9217
Switzerland	Franc	0.647497	0.772917	41.4817
Canada	Dollar	0.728526	0.869641	46.6728
Singapore	Dollar	0.500586	0.597550	32.0699
Australia	Dollar	0.631726	0.754091	40.4713
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.222689	2.653224	142.3959
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.223389	0.266660	14.3114
Brunei	Dollar	0.499095	0.595770	31.9744
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000085	0.000102	0.0055
Thailand	Baht	0.020368	0.024313	1.3049
UAE	Dirham	0.228091	0.272272	14.6126
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.193700	64.0647
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.221975	0.264971	14.2207
Mexico	New Peso	0.078872	0.094149	5.0529
New Zealand	Dollar	0.592204	0.706914	37.9394
Korea	Won	0.000817	0.000975	0.0523
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.025043	0.029894	1.6044

'05 budget . . .

From page B1

computing revenue collection.

The DBCC agreed that the BIR and the BOC could already include non-cash items in the computation of their revenue collection. Non-cash items are payments for taxes or duties that come in the form of Special Allotment Release Order (Saro). By using Saro in paying a tax or duty liability, a government agency allows the national government to simply deduct the amount of obligation to the budget that the former ought to receive.

This year, the BIR is tasked to collect P546.9 billion, while the BOC is supposed to contribute P151.2 billion to state coffers.

Chinatrust sees 25% profit jump

By Doris C. Dumlao

CHINATRUST (PHILIPPINES) COMMERCIAL Bank Corp. expects net profits this year to surge by 20-25 percent to P420 million over a year ago primarily on higher interest income.

In a yearend press briefing yesterday, Chinatrust president Joey Bermudez said the bank would not join the bandwagon of those raising fresh capital through tier 2 and hybrid tier 1 offerings, as its capital adequacy ratio of 33 percent was enough to hurdle the shift to new international accounting and Basle 2 capital impairment rules.Once its has complied with stringent provisioning requirements prescribed by new global standards, he said the bank's capital adequacy ratio would still likely be in the 30-percent level against risk assets.

For the full year, he said the bank's loan portfolio would likely expand by 20 percent.

GMA-7 . . .

From page B1

try. From a weak second in terms of ratings and profits, it was able to catapult itself to become the most profitable and highly rated starting 2003.

Fierce rival ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp. had remained profitable but its earnings were much lower than GMA 7's.

Gozon said the IPO would likely take place by the second quarter. The financial audit was being delayed because of changes in international accounting standards that took place this year, he explained. "There are accounting adjustments as far back as 2003. The adjustments must be completed before the financial audit can happen."

GMA 7 said it will meet its P2-billion profit target this year but would not likely exceed it as advertising revenue shrunk in the fourth quarter.

Shares . .

From page B1

the benchmark federal funds rate by a quarter percentage point Tuesday to 4.25 percent, the highest level in four-and-a-half years.

Market activity has also become tepid due to the Christmas holiday mood, "so most investors are just coasting along in the run-up to the Christmas break," Canizares said, adding that investors don't want to be in the market heavily during the holidays. AP

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From page B2

Empire East Land Inc.	0.42	0.42	0.42	0.42	1,550,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.32	1.34	1.32	1.34	2,927,000
Keppel Phils. Prop. Inc.	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	160,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	400,000
Philippine Estates Corp.	0.135	0.135	0.135	0.135	300,000
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.13	20,000
SM Development Corp.	1.38	1.38	1.38	1.38	8,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	7.8	7.8	7.8	7.8	21,677,000
		MINING			
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	210,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	0.91	0.91	0.9	0.9	250,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.007	0.007	0.007	0.007	2,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	5.8	5.8	5.7	5.7	324,000
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	53,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.22	0.225	0.22	0.22	10,330,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.245	0.26	0.245	0.26	20,680,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.02	0.021	0.02	0.02	118,900,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03	242,500,000
Omico Corp.	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	92,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	1.36	1.36	1.32	1.32	2,026,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	1.68	1.7	1.68	1.7	3,437,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	27.5	27.5	27	27	33,300
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	100,000
		OIL			
Imperial Res.	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	2,000,000
Interport Res. B	0.004	0.004	0.0036	0.0036	12,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	30,000,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.8	9,000

DBP starts ₱10-B tier 2 offering

By Doris C. Dumlao

STATE-OWNED DEVELOPMENT Bank of the Philippines yesterday launched a public offering of tier 2 subordinated notes worth P10 billion in line with its capital build-up program.

During an investors briefing, DBP president Reynaldo David said: "This issue allows DBP to achieve a two-fold objective of strengthening its capital base and providing investors with an attractive alternative to deposit products and other debt securities."

The tier 2 subordinated notes will mature in 10 years and are subject to optional redemption by the issuer after five years, with indicative interest rates ranging from 9.375 percent to 9.625 percent.

"Investors in DBP's tier 2 notes get to contribute to nation-building as their investments strengthen the ability of the country's primary development financing institution to provide resources necessary for sustainable growth and development," David added.

The issuance, which will raise the bank's capital adequacy ratio from 21 percent to 36-38 percent of risk assets, also aims to lessen its reliance on borrowings from multilateral institutions.

The minimum denomination was set at P500,000, with increments of P100,000 thereafter.

The unsecured subordinated tier 2 notes issuance is being managed by Deutsche Bank, First Metro Investment Corp. and HSBC. Land Bank of the Philippines and Multinational Investment Bancorporation were tapped as selling agents.

The issue date was slated for Dec. 22, following a domestic roadshow to be held starting this week in Iloilo, Cebu, Cagayan de Oro, Davao, Baguio and San Fernando, Pampanga.

The issuance is in line with DBP's plan to raise more than P15 billion through a combined tier 2 and hybrid tier 1 capital offering to the domestic market.

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Sta. Nino-Marikina
10:00 AM to 4:00 PM
Tutuban Primeblock
11:00 AM to 5:00 PM
Comercio
12:00 MN to 6:00 PM
Divisoria Center
LUZON
9:00 AM to 3:00 PM
Agoo, La Union
Aparri
Baguio-Bonifacio
Baguio-Carino
Baguio-Magsaysay
Baguio-Session
Bangued, Abra
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Solano
Tuguegarao-Balzain
Tuguegarao-Main
Vigan
VISAYAS
9:00 AM to 3:00 PM
Cebu-Downtown Center

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DECEMBER 26
Monday
METRO MANILA
9:00 AM to 3:00 PM
Farmer's Plaza
Sta. Elena
11:00 AM to 5:00 PM
Comercio
LUZON
9:00 AM to 3:00 PM
Batangas-Main
Dagupan-Perez
Laguna Bel-Air-Santa Rosa
Legaspi-Rizal
Lipa-Ayala
Lucena-Quezon
Sta. Rosa-Balibago
Tabaco
VISAYAS
9:00 AM to 3:00 PM
Calbayog
Cebu-Downtown Center
Cebu-Opon
Cebu-Taboan
Iloilo-Delgado
Iloilo-Iznart
Iloilo-Lapaz
Ormoc
MINDANAO
9:00 AM to 3:00 PM
Butuan-Main
Cagayan de Oro-Main
Iligan-Main
Pagadian-Rizal
Pagadian-Sta. Lucia
Surigao
Zamboanga-Galleria
10:00 AM to 4:00 PM
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Lagro
MacArthur Hway-Malinta
Malabon
Ortigas-San Miguel
Pritil-Tondo
Quiapo
Robinson's Place-Adriatico
Sucat-Gatchalian
9:30 AM to 3:30 PM
Sto. Cristo-C.M. Recto
10:00 AM to 4:00 PM
Sto. Cristo-San Nicolas
Tutuban
LUZON
9:00 AM to 3:00 PM
Agoo, La Union
Alaminos
Angeles-Main
Aparri
Baguio-Bonifacio
Baguio-Carino
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Dumaguete-Main
Dumaguete-Real
Iloilo-Jaro
Kalibo
Roxas
San Carlos-Negros Occidental
Silay
Tacloban-Main
Tagbilaran-Main
MINDANAO
9:00 AM to 3:00 PM
Butuan-Main
Cagayan de Oro-Main
Iligan-Main
Surigao

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MINDANAO (9:00 AM to 3:00 PM)
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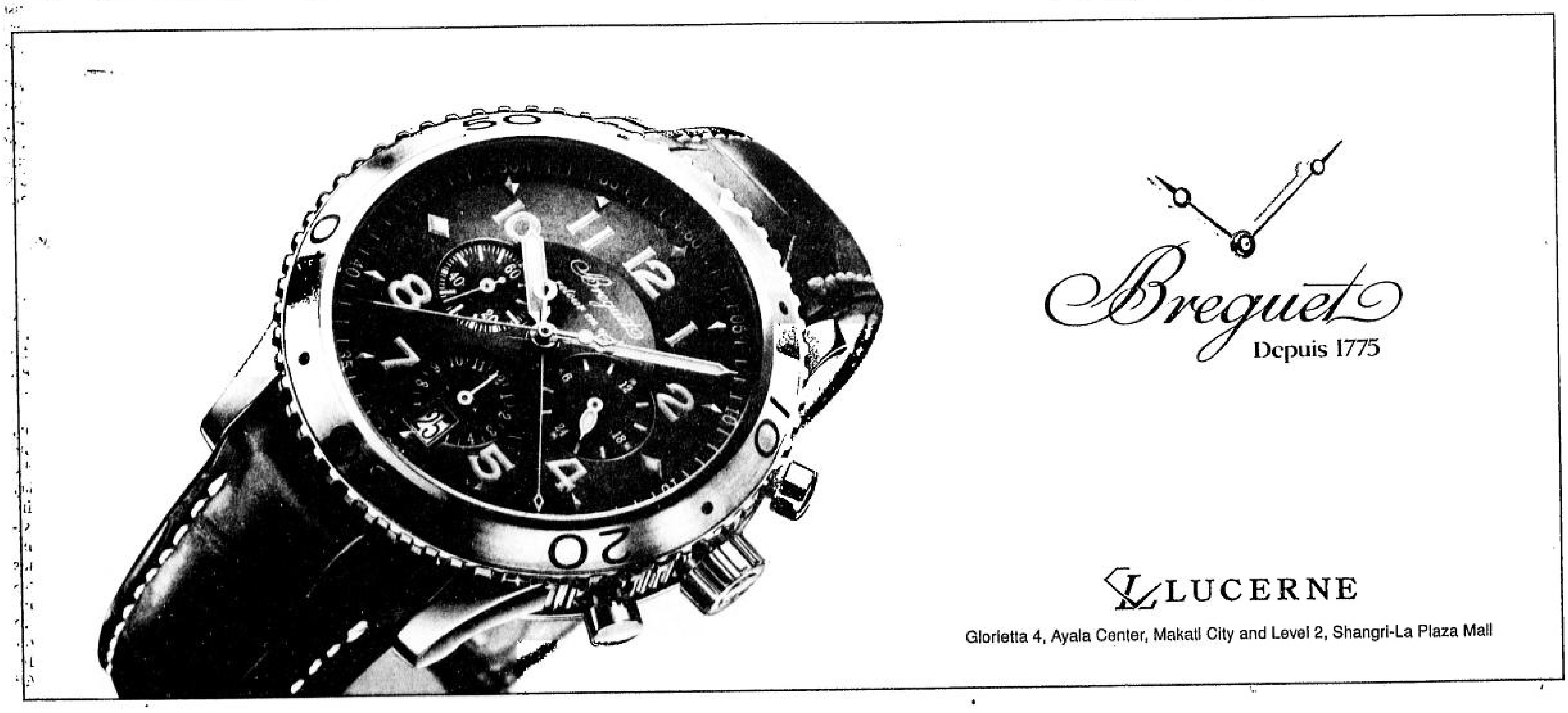
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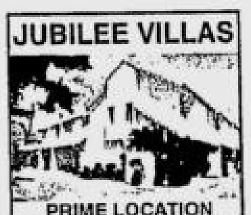

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Province of Agusan del Sur
Municipality of La Paz
BIDS & AWARDS COMMITTEE

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Municipal Government of La Paz invites all interested bidders to apply for eligibility and to bid for the CONSTRUCTION OF TWO (2) STOREY MUNICIPAL HALL BUILDING with an Approved Budget Cost (ABC) of Php 33, 391,331.42.

Only eligible contractors and duly registered with the LGU of La Paz shall be allowed to participate. Prospective bidders must submit their Letter of Intent and other pertinent documents not later than December 26, 2005 at three o' clock in the afternoon. Issuance of Bid documents will be on January 02, 2005 upon payment of non-refundable amount of Php 5,000.00. Pre-bid conference will be on January 16, 2006 at ten o' clock in the morning of the Office of the Municipal Mayor, this Municipality.

Deadline of Submission of duly accomplished Bid / Price Proposals to the Chairman, Bids & Awards Committee shall not be later than ten o'clock in the morning, January 30, 2006. Opening of bids shall commence at two o' clock in the afternoon of the same day.

This Municipal Bids & Awards Committee reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

(Sgd.) LITO S. MUNEZ, C.E.
Municipal Administrator / Chairman
Bids & Awards Committee

(PDI – December 15 & 22. 2005)

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INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Provision of Computer Units Consisting of Sixty-One (61) Desktops and Nine (9) Notebooks Under a Three-Year Lease

1. PSALM, through its 2005 Corporate Operating Budget intends to apply the sum of SEVEN MILLION FIVE HUNDRED THOUSAND PESOS (P7,500,000.00) being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the above project. Bids received that exceed the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.
2. PSALM now invites Bids from eligible Bidders for the provision of computer units consisting of sixty-one (61) desktops and nine (9) notebooks under a three-year lease at PSALM's Offices on Ayala Avenue. Completion of delivery and installation of the Goods shall be within fifteen (15) days from receipt of Notice to Proceed. The description of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB. Prospective Bidders should have experience in undertaking at least one (1) project involving lease of computers with an amount of at least 50% of the ABC during the last five (5) years. Prospective Bidders must have at least two (2) computer engineers and three (3) computer technicians as their regular employees all of whom have at least five (5) years experience.
3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of R.A. 9184, and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to R.A. 5183. Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The Bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.
4. Interested Bidders may obtain further information from PSALM and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below on weekdays, from **December 9-16, 2005** between **10:00AM and 4:00PM.**

   Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corporation
   Mr. Ruben S. Reinoso, Jr.
   2nd Floor, SGV II Building, Ayala Avenue, Makati City
   Tel: (02)893-8202 Ext. 106; Fax: 840-3698
   E-mail: *rsreinoso@psalm.gov.ph*
5. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by Interested Bidders from the address below and upon payment of a nonrefundable fee of FIVE THOUSAND PESOS (P5,000.00), either in cash or Cashier's check on weekdays from **December 8–21, 2005**, 10:00AM-4:00PM. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.
6. PSALM will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all those who purchased the Bidding Documents on **January 6, 2006, 2:00 PM** at the PSALM Boardroom, 2nd Floor, SGV II Building, Ayala Avenue, Makati City.
7. Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below not later than 2:00PM of **January 19, 2006.** All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in the form and amount indicated in Section III of the Bidding Documents, BDS. Late Bids shall not be accepted.
8. Bid opening shall be on **January 19, 2006** 2:00PM at PSALM Boardroom, 2nd Floor, SGV II Building, Ayala Avenue, Makati City. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below.
9. PSALM reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

(Sgd.) **RUBEN S. REINOSO, JR.**
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee
December 8 and 15, 2005

(December 8 and 15, 2005)

More Classifieds on pages 6-7

What's up, bok?

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

SOMETHING BIG must be happening in the Araneta group—you know, owner of the world famous Araneta Coliseum, venue of the boxing classic "Thrilla in Manila."

The group's main man, Jorge L. Araneta, who is the chair, president and CEO of Araneta Center Inc., with his famous wife Stella Marquez the other day made a curious rare public appearance.

With media coverage, at that! Television cameras and all! In as public a place as any, a new high-end mall at the Araneta Center called Gateway!

The last time Araneta talked to media was…let me see…NEVER.

Moreover, with him at that odd media briefing were Aurelio Montinola III, president and CEO of Bank of PI (Ayala group) and Richard Lee, president of Universal Motors (Nissan brand of light trucks).

Apparently, those business biggies faced media to launch the zero-percent BPI credit card promo at Gateway, with Universal Motors providing the Nissan light truck for the raffle prize. Apparently!

Again, it's just your usual credit card promo, something that banks, malls and car companies do more often than I bathe in cold December.

Anyway, BPI also belongs to the Ayala group, which also happens to own the Ayala Center, which, in turn, is a worthwhile competitor of Araneta Center (plus the Ortigas Center, and that's about it) in the upmarket real estate business of commercial complexes.

And BPI boss Montinola was there!

(Of course, even if the Araneta group does battle with the bank's parent Ayala, BPI is also the biggest financier of the Gateway construction, making the Araneta group one of the bank's big-time clients.)

Araneta told me that, in a tie-up with the hot listed real estate firm Megaworld, the group is also building 17 residential high rise buildings at the Araneta center.

Again—that's 17!

Construction will start next year already.

In the plan are also office towers and a hotel. You know—just like Ayala and Ortigas centers.

Look, bok, I have been in this news business long enough to know that when a publicity-aloof man like Jorge Araneta forces himself to face media, something is afoot.

Hmmm. Is the Araneta group then maybe ripe for an IPO?

* * *

FINALLY, this cute administration of Gloriaetta is serious about doing what can be its "showcase" infra project.

That's the mass transit plus road system called MRT 7, stretching from Marilao (Bulacan) to SM North (Quezon City), passing through Commonwealth Ave.

From what I gathered, the DOTC is readying the project proponent, Universal LRT Corp., for the "Swiss challenge."

(That has nothing to do with numbered bank accounts in the Alps. It simply means that other groups, perhaps wanting to steal the MRT 7 project from its original proponent, must bid for it. To keep the project, the original proponent only has to match the winning bid.)

Now, with the coming of the "Swiss challenge," you can be sure the MRT 7 project already passed the rigid screening of the DOTC, the NEDA, and the ICC (the Investment Coordinating Council chaired by Gloriaetta herself.)

Government approval took all of five long years, actually. I heard for instance that the project needed six—again, SIX—legal opinions from the DOJ. Whew!

Well, for one, the MRT 7 is like no other mass transit project such as "MRT 3" on Edsa or "LRT 1" on Taft-Rizal or "LRT 2" on Recto-Aurora. By the way, if we are now on the number "7" line of mass transit, what happened to "4," "5," and "6?"

Anyway, like the Araneta Center, MRT 7 is mainly a real estate play. It will not make money in the transport business, but from commercial and residential projects at the train stations and depots.

Moreover, part of the plan is to build a six-lane highway, connecting the North Luzon Expressway to the train depot in Bulacan. Thus, provincial buses from the north do not have to go into Metro Manila and clog all the roads to a standstill.

(It is estimated that by 2012, daily trips of provincial buses coming to Metro Manila from the north will increase by 10,000. This will convert Edsa into a veritable parking lot.)

This cute administration correctly saw that MRT 7 could be the solution.

But in the past five years of grilling the proponent, this cute administration also brought in a tough condition: No government help for the project whatsoever.

That means no government guarantee on loans, no government equity in the venture, no government subsidy on the fare.

But the project costs a lot of money, estimated to reach easily $1.2 billion with the real estate component and the highway system.

Yet all over the world, no mass transit really makes money out of the trains alone.

Thus, MRT 7 must make money out of the real estate business to cover for the train system. It was the only way for Universal LRT to attract bigtime investors.

And what an impressive line-up it has!

They are, for example, Alstorm (French firm that is second biggest transportation firm in the world), Tyco (the world's largest maker of electrical components based in the United States), and SM Investment (the local firm that is building new malls almost every other day or something).

Gov't set to grant perks to footwear industry

By Michelle V. Remo

THE GOVERNMENT IS POISED TO GRANT fiscal incentives to the country's ailing footwear and leather industries, which have been adversely affected by the influx of cheap or smuggled imports, mainly from China.

The Department of Finance and the Board of Investments (BOI) are in the process of consolidating their versions of the implementing rules and regulations (IRR) of Republic Act No. 9290, which extends incentives to the industry.

Under the law, the industries would be granted incentives for 10 years.

These include zero duty on imported capital equipment and raw materials, and deduction from taxable income of half of the expenses on training programs.

The incentives likewise call for the inclusion of the industries' products on the list of items carried and sold in duty-free shops, and the granting of tax credits to cover tax liabilities from the purchase of raw materials and supplies from the domestic market.

RA No. 9290 also mandates government personnel and encourages private sector workers entitled to clothing and shoe allowances to source their footwear and leather goods from local manufacturers.

The government also commits to provide easy credit access to industry members.

The law was enacted as early as April last year, but it could not be implemented because there were no IRR.

The shoe industry had long been calling for some form of government support, as it had been badly affected by stiff competition with cheap imports.

Many of its members had already halted operations.

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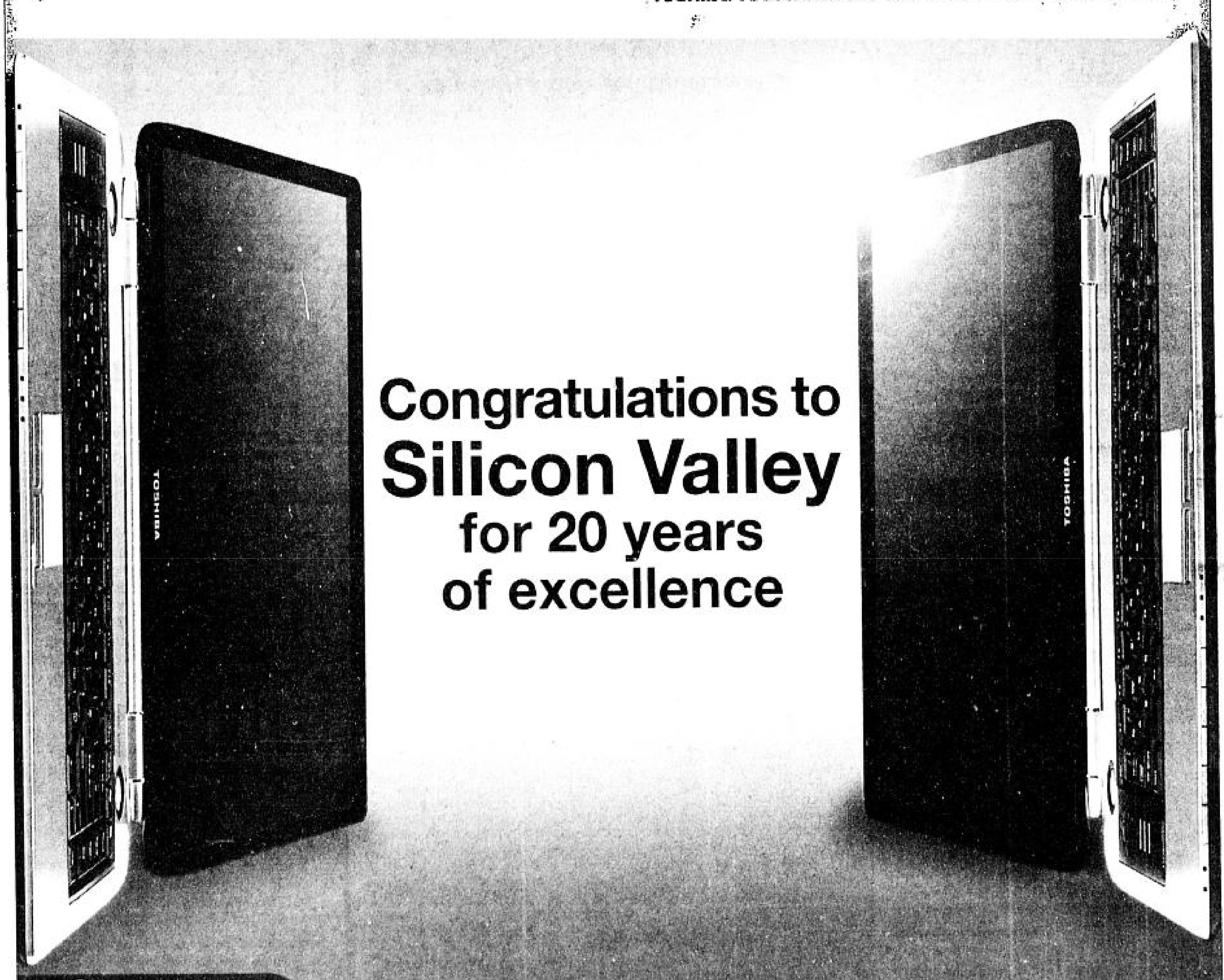

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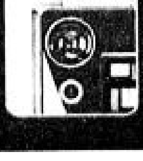

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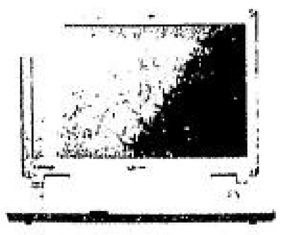

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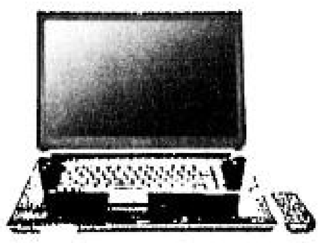

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PUBLIC NOTICES

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is given that the estate of the late ROSITA MANGAO nee FLORES, who died intestate, was extrajudicially settled by her heirs before Notary Public Atty. Joaquin M. Chua of Manila, per Doc. No. 46, Page No. 11, Book No. X, Series of 2005.
(PDI- Decx. 15, 22 & 29, 2005)

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late Lourdes V. Enriquez was extrajudicially settled by her heirs per Doc. # 407, Page #83, Book #09, Series of 2005 before Notary Public Atty. Hilarion Onadto of Mandaluyong City
(PDI-Dec. 1, 8 & 15, 2005)

PUBLIC NOTICES

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late RENATO E. RAMOS has been extrajudicially settled among his heirs as per Doc. No. 15; Page No. 04; Book No. X; Series of 2005 of the notarial register of Notary Public Atty. Macur D. Marohombsar of Pasig City.
(PDI-Dec. 8, 15 & 22, 2005)

Notice of Self-adjudication by Geminiano Medalla of the estate of Trinidal Medalla Doc#153, Page#32, Book#II, Series of 2005 before Notary Public Rene Q. Pahulayan of Sto. Tomas Batangas (PDI-Dec.15,22&29,2005)

NOTICE OF LOSS

Notice is hereby given that AYALA LAND, INC. Certificate No. 08211124 for One Hundred One Thousand One Hundred Ninety One (101,191) shares issued in the name of JOSE TANSO was reported loss. If one year from December 14, 2005 no advised claim is presented to the company, this certificate will be considered null and void and a new certificate will be issued in lieu thereof.
(PDI - Dec. 15, 22 & 29, 2005)

Notice is hereby given that Club Filipino stock certificate No. 1947 for one (1) share issued to Elvira A. Baluyut was reported lost. If no contest received, new certificate will be issued.
(PDI-Dec. 15, 22 & 29, 2005)

INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

RTW CONSIGN 0917-8830002

Wanted: FullTime Marketing Manager 0917-8463228

NEED SIDELINE! Set your Hrs! P/F up lp 20K/mo. 376-2642 & 44

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

MALE

DRIVER 10 Yrs exp. stay in, police, Brgy Clearance 2005, 724-9330 • 0919-8255398

ELECTRONICS ENGR 1YR EXPR. MEYCAUAYAN T-7264046

FEMALE

ACCOUNTING Grad Under 30 Yrs Old 724-9330 • 0919-8255398

B'KPR-ACCTG GRAD FEMALE SMART-PERSONABLE 8215236

CPA BKeper Exec Asst. Computer Expert 26YO blw Cainta Resd. Send resume caesar_cortes@yahoo.com 0917-8838088

MALE/FEMALE

BE AN INSURANCE AGENT!!! CALL ROSE 3628624 &20

URGENT! CALL CENTER AGENTS Fluent in English Fax resume @ 879-8272

URGENT HIRING CALL CENTER AGENT PLS CALL 897-6062 LOOK FOR TRAY / AMY OR SEND YOUR RESUME @ tcarson@ellickcorp.com

PERSONAL

PRAYER TO ST. ANTHONY

O Holy St. Anthony, gentlest of Saints, your love for God and charity for His creatures, made you worthy, when on earth, to possess miraculous powers. Miracles waited on your word, which you were ever ready to speak for those in trouble or anxiety. Encouraged by this thought, I implore of you to obtain for me (request). The answer to my prayer may require a miracle, even so, you are the Saint of Miracles. O gentle and loving St. Anthony, whose heart was ever full of human sympathy, whisper my petition into the ears of the Sweet Infant Jesus, who loved to be folded in your arms; and the gratitude of my heart will ever be yours. (Thank you very much for the graces.)

NOVENA TO THE MOST SACRED HEART OF JESUS AND SAINT JUDE

May the most Sacred Heart of Jesus be praised, blessed, loved, adored and glorified throughout the whole world now and forever Amen.

Most Sacred Heart of Jesus. Pray for us.

St. Jude, worker of miracles, helper for the helpless, pray for us.

Say nine times a day for nine days. Prayer will be answered by the eighth day, it has never failed.

Thank you very much, Most Sacred Heart of Jesus and St. Jude for favor granted.

UNION MEDICA PHARMACEUTICAL LIMITED, INC.

FOR IMMEDIATE HIRING

MEDICAL REPRESENTATIVE

MANILA, SOUTH LUZON, VISAYAS, MINDANAO

- Female / Male not over 30 y/o, BS degree holder from a reputable College or University
- At least 1 year experience in a Pharmaceutical Co. / Marketing under the areas of assignment mentioned above (Fresh Graduates are welcome to apply)
- Must have pleasing looks and aggressive personality
- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills
- Computer literate
- Willing to be assigned in any province

BOOKKEEPER / ACCOUNTING CLERK

- College Graduate – Accounting major
- Preferably with at least 1 year relevant experience
- Computer Literate
- Preferably Female 21 – 30 y/o
- Can work with minimum supervision

Interested applicants are requested to immediately mail or email their comprehensive resumé with 2x2 photo before January 4 , 2006 .

Mail: **Luzon:** c/o DR. M. MELGAR Unit 3002,
Astoria Plaza Hotel Escriva Drive
Ortigas Center, Pasig City. Manila and Luzon applicants will be interviewed on January 4 , 2006 (9:00 am – 3:00 pm)
Visayas / Mindanao: Clinica Melgar,
Rm. 205, Doña Luisa Bldg. Fuente Osmeña, Cebu City
Visayas and Mindanao applicants will be contacted for interview on January 6 & 7, 2006 respectively (9:00 am – 3:00 pm)
or
Email : liemgmichael@gmail.com

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afp retirement and separation benefits system
Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City
Telephone Nos. 911-4071 to 80

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

AFP Retirement and Separation Benefits System (AFPRSBS)

CONSULTANCY SERVICES FOR THE PERSON-POSITION MATCHING ASSESSMENT EXERCISE IN AFPRSBS

(Consists in Employees' Profiling with the end in view of placing the right person at the right position and determining career options available for the subject employee)

1. The AFP Retirement and Separation Benefits System (AFPRSBS), through the 2005 Corporate budget as approved by its Board of Trustees intends to apply the sum of FIVE HUNDRED FIFTY THOUSAND PHILIPPINES PESOS (P550,000.00), inclusive of all taxes, fees and expenses, being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the Contract for Consultancy Services for the Person-Position Matching Assessment Exercise. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at the opening of the financial proposals.
2. The AFPRSBS now calls for the submission of Letters of Intent (LOI) from potential bidders to apply for eligibility and short listing for Employees' profiling that will place the right person at the right position and determine career options available for the subject employee. Interested consultants must submit their LOIs on or before 22 December 2005 at CMA-C, 2nd Flr, AFPRSBS Bldg., 424 Capinpin Ave., Camp Gen Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City and secure the Eligibility Documents therefrom. Applications for eligibility will be evaluated on a "pass/fail" basis. The last day for the submission of the accomplished Eligibility Documents shall be on the date of the opening of Eligibility Documents: **on or before 2:00PM of 11 January 2006 at CMA-C, 2nd Flr, AFPRSBS Bldg, 424 Capinpin Ave., Camp Gen Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City**. Only those that are short listed will be entitled to submit bids.
3. The BAC shall draw up the short list of consultants from those who have submitted LOIs and have been determined as eligible both in accordance with the provisions of Republic Act (R.A.) No. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A). The criteria and rating system for short listing are:
   i. *Applicable experience of the consultant considering both the overall experiences of the firm and the individual experiences of the principal and key staff including the times when employed by other firms (40%);*
   ii. *Qualification of Consultant/s staff who may be assigned to the job vis-à-vis extent and complexity of the undertaking (30%); and*
   iii. *Current workload relative to capacity (30%);*
4. LOIs must be delivered by hand, through mail, facsimile to CMA-C 2nd Flr AFPRSBS Bldg, 424 Capinpin Ave., Camp Gen Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City on or before **5:00PM on 22 December 2005.**
5. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures as specified in the IRR-A of RA No. 9184, and is restricted, unless otherwise stated, to Filipino citizens or organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest belonging to citizens of the Philippines. In accordance with IRR-A of RA No. 9184, only bids from short listed consultants will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in the Eligibility Documents. In accordance with the IRR-A of RA No. 9184 the contract will only be awarded to the Highest Rated and Responsive Bidder who was determined as such during post-qualification.

   The PROCURING ENTITY shall evaluate bids using the Quality-Cost Based Evaluation/Selection (QCBE/QCBS) procedure. The PROCURING ENTITY shall indicate the weights to be allocated for the Technical and Financial Proposals. The criteria and rating system for the evaluation of bids shall be provided in the Instructions to Bidders.
6. Interested consultants may obtain further information from the Human Resources Department, AFPRSBS, Camp Gen Emilio Aguinaldo, Q.C. (Tel No. 9114071-80) from 9:00 to 11:30 AM and 1:00PM to 4:00PM.
7. The contract shall be completed within forty five (45) working days.
8. The AFPRSBS reserves the right to reject any and all bids, annul the bidding process, or not award the contract at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

Human Resource Department
Marietta Co-Arnaldo (Hd, HRD) or Ronald Cahigan
AFPRSBS, 424 Capinpin Ave., Camp Gen Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City
911-5984; 911-4071 loc 256
mc_arnaldo_2000@yahoo.com or ronnel2195@yahoo.com
911-8630 (fax)

FRANKLIN C. ACOSTA
Signature of the BAC Chairman or
Authorized Representative of the
BAC Chairman

(PDI - Dec. 8 & 15, 2005)

Republic of the Philippines
NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY
Region V, Legazpi City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID FOR TRUCKING/HAULING SERVICES

The NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY (NFA) Region V, invites all interested Trucking/Hauling operators to apply for eligibility and to bid for the supply of trucking/hauling services for more or less 83,890 MT or 1,677,800 bags Imported Rice covering the following routes:

Source/ Destination	Distance in kms	Lot No.	Volume in MT	Minimum No. of Trucking Requirements	Budget for the Contract (Php)
Tabaco City to:					
Legazpi City	26	1	7,500	3	1,218,750.00
Ligao City	29	2	5,000	2	835,200.00
Libon, Albay	42	3	2,500	2	497,700.00
Cabid-an, Sor.	80	4	5,000	3	1,656,000.00
Bulan, Sor.	153	5	3,000	2	1,589,120.00
Palestina, CSU	86	6	24,235	12	9,795,787.00
Naga City	93	7	11,000	4	4,623,960.00
Libmanan, CSU	117	8	3,000	2	2,070,900.00
Daet, CNO	189	9	17,905	9	12,317,923.80
SUBTOTAL			79,140	39	34,605,340.80
Legazpi City to:					
Ligao City	31.5	10	500	2	87,570.00
Libon, Albay	45.5	11	250	2	53,576.25
Cabid-an, Sor.	54	12	1,095	3	276,137.10
Bulan, Sor.	130	13	250	2	123,500.00
Palestina, Pili	88	14	1,405	3	552,670.80
Naga City	95	15	500	2	209,950.00
Libmanan, CSU	119	16	250	2	119,000.00
Daet, CNO	191	17	500	3	343,800.00
SUBTOTAL			4,750	19	1,766,204.15
OVERALL TOTAL			83,890		36,371,544.95

Prospective bidders must be the registered owners of the minimum number of trucks/units which are preferably "Trucks-for-Hire". Likewise, prospective bidders may bid in any or all specified/preferred routes. For operational expediency, only trucking facilities with a minimum capacity of 400 bags at 50 kgs shall be given priority in trucking services to destination outside the province of Albay.

The schedule of bidding activities are as follows:

	ACTIVITIES	DATE	TIME
1.	Issuance of Eligibility Requirements & Bidding Documents	Dec. 07 to 19, 2005	8:00 AM - 5:00 PM
2.	Pre-Bid Conference	Dec. 19, 2005	10:00 AM
3.	Deadline for Submission of Eligibility Requirements & Bid Tender Forms	Jan. 05, 2006	9:30 AM
4.	Opening of Eligibility Requirements & Bid Tender Forms	Jan. 05, 2006	10:00 AM

The pre-bidding conference and bidding proper shall be conducted at the conference room, 2nd Floor, NFA Office Building, Pier Site, Legazpi City. All trucking operators interested to participate in the bidding must be registered/accredited with NFA. Interested bidders who are not accredited with the NFA or whose registration had already expired may still participate provided they shall apply for accreditation/renewal at NFA Region V.

The application forms, eligibility requirements and other bid documents shall be obtained from the RBAC Secretariat after payment of nonrefundable registration fee of P5,000.00.

The eligibility of prospective bidders shall be determined using "Pass/Fail" criteria and shall be determined as either "eligible" or ineligible". If the prospective bidder is rated "Passed" for all the requirements, he shall be considered "eligible". If the prospective bidder is rated "Failed" in any of the requirements, he shall be considered ineligible.

A single stage bidding will be adopted. The prospective bidders shall submit simultaneously two (2) envelopes, Envelope A containing the eligibility requirements and Envelope B containing bidding documents. Contents of each of the bid envelopes are specified in the Instructions to Bidders.

Eligibility criteria includes the value of the prospective bidders largest contract within the last five (5) years, completed within the period and similar to the contract to be bid which must be at least fifty-percent (50%) of the budget for the contract to be bid.

THE NFA RESERVES THE RIGHT TO ACCEPT OR REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, TO WAIVE ANY FORMALITIES OR DEFECTS FOUND THEREIN OR ACCEPT SUCH BIDS OR TO AWARD TO ANY CONTRACTOR WHOSE BID IS CONSIDERED MOST ADVANTAGEOUS TO THE GOVERNMENT.

For further inquiries, please contact the RBAC Secretariat at Tel. Nos. (052) 820-0018, (052) 480-7015 & Telefax No. (056) 480-7900.

(Sgd.) JOSE B. GUEVARA
RBAC Chairman

(PDI - Dec. 8 & 15, 2005)

University of the Philippines
Diliman, Quezon City
OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

CSSP FACULTY CENTER
ENGINEERING DESIGN SERVICES

1. The UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES – DILIMAN (hereinafter referred to as the PROCURING ENTITY) through the UP reprogrammed funds intends to apply the sum of **One Million Five Hundred Thousand Pesos (PhP 1.50 Million)** being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for **Engineering Design Services for the CSSP Faculty Center**. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at the opening of the financial proposals.
2. The PROCURING ENTITY now calls for the submission of **Letters of Intent (LOI)** from potential bidders to apply for eligibility and short listing for the **complete structural/civil, electrical, sanitary and mechanical engineering design** for the CSSP Faculty Center Building. Interested consultants must submit their LOIs on or before **21 December 2005, 5 p.m.** at the Office of the Campus Architect, Coral Building, Lakandula Street, UP Diliman, Quezon City and secure the Eligibility Documents therefrom. Applications for eligibility will be evaluated on a "pass/fail" basis. The last day for the submission of the accomplished Eligibility Documents shall be on the date of the opening of Eligibility Documents: **20 January 2006, 5:00 p.m.** at the Office of the Campus Architect, Coral Building, Lakandula Street, UP Diliman, Quezon City. Only those that are short-listed will be entitled to submit bids.
3. The BAC shall draw up the short list of consultants from those who have submitted LOIs and have been determined as eligible both in accordance with the provisions of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184) and its Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A). The short list of prospective bidders shall consist of five (5) consultants. The criteria and rating system for short listing are:
   - Financial Capability: At least PhP 300,000.00 paid-up capital
   - Length of Experience of the Firm
   - Experience of the Firm with Similar Projects
   - Current Workload Relative To Capacity
   - Qualifications of Key Personnel
4. LOIs must be delivered by hand to the address below at no later than **5:00 p.m.** on or before **21 December 2005.**
5. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures as specified in the IRR-A of R.A. 9184, and is restricted to Filipino citizens or organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest belonging to citizens of the Philippines. In accordance with IRR-A of R.A. 9184, only bids from short listed consultants will be opened. The process for the eligibility is described in the Eligibility Documents. In accordance with IRR-A of R.A. 9184 the contract will only be awarded to the Highest Rated and Responsive Bidder who was determined as such during post-qualification.

   The PROCURING ENTITY shall evaluate bids using Quality-Cost Based Evaluation/Selection (QCBE-QCBS) procedure. The PROCURING ENTITY shall indicate the weights to be allocated for the Technical and Financial Proposals. The criteria and rating system for the evaluation of bids shall be provided in the Instructions To Bidders.
6. Interested consultants may obtain further information from the PROCURING ENTITY through a written query delivered or faxed to the address given below from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

   UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES – DILIMAN
   SERGIO S. CAO
   Chancellor
   c/o
   THE OFFICE OF THE CAMPUS ARCHITECT
   Address: Coral Building, Lakandula Street, UP Diliman, Quezon City
   Fax Number: 927-8656
   E-mail: oca@up.edu.ph
   Website: http://www.upd.edu.ph/~oca
7. The consultancy contract shall be completed within three (3) months (up to Contract Documents Phase.)
8. The UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES – DILIMAN reserves the right to reject any and all bids, annul the bidding process, or not award the contract at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

(Sgd.) MARY DELIA G. TOMACRUZ
BAC Chairman

(PDI – December 9 & 15, 2005)

WELCOMES
PARTICIPANTS & GUEST on
COOKING SEMINAR USING COMBI-STEAMER
DEC. 1, 2005
#18 MISSOURI ST., GREENHILLS, SAN JUAN

GERMAN CHEF VOLKMAR FOR ELOMA COMBI STEAMERS

World-renowned German Chef Volkmar recently conducted a series of demo and workshops on the **ELOMA COMBI STEAMERS**, units that relieve you of many chores while preparing meals. Eloma is an advanced equipment that offers a wide range of possibilities. Eloma Combi Steamer is the ideal cooking tool for caterers and restaurants. See more of Eloma in Bakery & Catering World 2006 (co-located Food & Bakery Franchise 2006, Sweets & Dairy 2006, Food Ingredients and Flavorings Fair with Kiosk & Food Cart Show) on Jan. 19-21, 2006 at the World Trade Center. In photo are (from left) Ador Silao (King Richards, sole distributor of Eloma), Chef Volkmar, Joy Morillo (King Richards), Nancy King (King Richards), Jocelle Pascual (PEPGroup organizer), Ria Lugtu (PEPGroup), Vic Ganapathy (principal of Eloma), Ricardo King (King Richards). For inquiries on Bakery & Catering World 2006, call PEPGroup at 9297993, 4354790, 4269603, 9208136, 9297963 or email info@PEPgroup.com or check website at www.bakeryworldexpo.com.

Manila Memorial Park
Leading the Way
SUCAT
HOLY CROSS
DASMARIÑAS
CEBU
DAVAO
BULACAN
(632) 815 1875 or 90
(632) 893 8374 to 77

OBITUARIES

THE HERITAGE PARK
FORT BONIFACIO
Funeral Home and Crematory
845-2334 to 38; 845-2440

Aurora Manalo Limjoco

Widow of the Late **Maximino H. Limjoco**

March 11, 1922 – December 13, 2005

She shall be missed by her children **Rene** and **Lu Ciocon** and **Ariel**; grandchildren **Miko, Ian** and **Mara**; brothers & sisters-in-law **Armando** and **Rosario Manalo, Rodolfo** and **Leticia Manalo, Simplicio** and **Rosario Manalo, Ernesto** (†) and **Nila Manalo, Noel** and **Monina Manalo, Bing** and **Yolanda Manalo**; sisters and brothers-in-law **Irmina** and **Abdon Mendigorin, Albina** (†) and **Celso** (†) **Dans, Lina** and **Benito Vergara**.

Her remains lie in state at Santuario de San Antonio Chapels, Forbes Park, Makati City.

Interment will be at Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina on 17th of December 2005 after the 1:00 p.m. Holy Mass.

VICENTE MAGSINO YLAGAN JR.

of Mandaluyong City and Lemery, Batangas peacefully joined Our Lord at the age of 68, last December 8, 2005

His loving wife **Julieta**; children **Jojo & Lisa, Joey & Sheila, Josyl & Rushel, Jeweel**, Grandchildren **Sam & Kayla, Jamil & John, Julia & Tanya**; Brothers & Sisters **Luningning, Adolfo, Prospero, Arturo, Edna, Marleen**; Relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Chapel Q, Loyola Guadalupe, Makati City.

Interment will be today, December 15, 2005 at Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina City after the 8:30 a.m. Mass.

Carmen Salamanca Borromeo

"Mitz"

beloved wife, mother, sister, and friend
went home to meet our Heavenly Father
on December 13, 2005.

Her remains lie in state at the White Plains Chapel,
Nathan Road, White Plains Subdivision, Quezon City.
Cremation services will be announced shortly.

We love you, Mom.

Tony
Jojo & Gary
Mitos
Chevic, George, Melissa & Kristina
JB, Clara, Chesca, Mon, & Ginny
Maito & Millette

An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.

Always caring...

INQUIRER OBITUARIES

OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS:
① Copy of Death Certificate;
② Any identification document (I.D.)

DEATH ANNOUNCEMENT • MESSAGE OF THANKS • DEATH ANNIVERSARY • REQUIEMS • FREE OBIT DESIGN

DEATH NOTICE

Rufino de Leon - Ingalla

of Libis, San Rafael, Bulacan

passed away last December 8, 2005 at the age of 84. His body was intered last December 13, 2005 at San Rafael Catholic Cemetery, San Rafael, Bulacan.

We lovingly remember
ON HIS FOURTH DEATH ANNIVERSARY

July 22, 1935 - December 15, 2001
Centro Escolar University
College of Optometry 1959

MENELIO B. SAMSON

His loving wife Lydia, child Meldy & son-in-law Jack, grandchildren Biggs, Alodia, Lynelle, request friends and relatives to join them in prayers for the eternal repose of his soul. Holy masses will be offered for his intention.

Our Dearly Beloved

ELISA MONTIEL BAJA

(January 15, 1931 - November 7, 2005)

Peacefully joined our Creator last November 7, 2005 in San Francisco, California.

Her father **Col. Emanuel A. Baja** (†) and mother **Basilia Montiel-Baja** (†); sister and brothers **Adelida Baja-Oropeza** (†), **Herminia Baja-Panlilio** (†), **Maximina Baja-Torrijos, Lydia** (†), **Luis** (†), **Marietta** (†), **Ricardo** (†), and **Teresita Baja-Luis**; sister-in-law **Sixta L. Baja**; brothers-in-law **Luis Oropeza** (†), **Manuel V. Panlilio, Carlos Torrijos** and **Rodolfo H. Luis**, nephews, nieces, grandchildren, and friends request your prayers for the eternal rest of her soul.

Her ashes will be interred immediately after the 9:00 a.m. Holy Mass on Sunday, December 18, 2005 at the Garden of Eternal Life, Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina City.

> **"absent from the body to be present with the Lord."**
>
> 2 Corinthians 5:8

CLASSIFIEDS

Palay buying booms in NFA Antique

AN AGGRESSIVE PALAY BUYING STANCE HAS allowed the National Food in Antique to post the best performance in grains procurement covering the period January to middle of November this year. NFA Antique has bought a total of 30,402 bags of palay against its 38,000 bags target posting an 80 percent accomplishment for the ten and half months. The agency's office in Capiz came in second place with 28,466 bags of palay bought against 64,000 bags target or 44 percent accomplishment. Provincial manager Procopio B. Trabajo II said the accomplishment is the result of the intensive the agency's mobile procurement teams in the province to reach farmers in remote areas and help them transport their produce to the NFA grains centers. Mobile procurement teams were deployed in the towns of San Remigio, Hamtic, Valderrama, Patnongon, Tobias Ferrer and Bugasong. The NFA also tapped the Municipal Agriculturist to serve as contact person of farmers who want to sell their palay to NFA through mobile procurement. For more information on NFA programs, the public may send their inquiries via the Text NFA Program through mobile number 0917-6210927.

WELCOME
SIGNING OF THE COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENT (CBA)
2004-2009
between
TECHNOLOGICAL INSTITUTE OF THE PHILIPPINES (TIP)
and
TECHNOLOGICAL INSTITUTE OF THE PHILIPPINES TEACHERS AND EMPLOYEES ORGANIZATION (TIPTEO)
NOVEMBER 24, 2005

TIP-TIPTEO CBA SIGNED

Shown during the CBA signing (from left to right) are Technological Institute of the Philippines (TIP) Mangement Representative Col. Reynaldo V. Chinjen, TIP president Elizabeth Q. Lahoz, National Coalition and Mediation Board (NCMB) director Rey Ubaldo and TIPTEO acting president Engr. Oliver Merin.

WIFI
ZONE
the personal broadband experience
now!

Bakery and Catering World 2006 to be held on January 19-21, 2006 at the World Trade Center, Manila Philippines offer wireless Internet connection (WIFI) through airborne access. Exhibitors and visitors will be provided with up-to-date convenience to transact business over the worldwide web. Airborne access joins the expo as a sponsor. Co-located events of Bakery & Catering World are the Flavorings and Food Ingredients Fairs 2006, Food and Bakery Franchising by the Philippine Franchise Association, and The Kiosk & Food Cart Show. Seminars and workshops on topics such as commissary operations, learning the art of sugar, franchising your business, acquiring ISO 9001, operating a catering business and more are lined up. For inquiries, call PEPGroup at 9297993, 4354790, 9208136, 9297963 or email info@PEPgroup.com. In photo from left are Joel Pascual of PEPGroup, organizer of Bakery & Catering World and Mike Antigua of Airborne Access.

BUSINESS

Naia-3 completion work seen to start in Q1

Japanese contractor gets initial payment of $10M

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE ARROYO ADMINISTRATION HAS paid $10 million to Japanese contractor Takenaka Corp. as initial payment for the completion of work at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport Terminal 3.

Malacañang has directed the Manila International Airport Authority to forge a working agreement with Takenaka within the month so that completion work at Naia-3 could start in January next year, according to Transport Assistant Secretary Robert Castanares.

Castanares said the down payment of $10 million signified the intention of the government to open and operate the mothballed terminal as soon as possible.

To put Naia 3 into full operation, the government would have to pay Takenaka between $50 million and $100 million.

Transport Secretary Leandro Mendoza said the government aimed to open Naia 3 within the first half of 2006.

Discussions between the Miaa and Takenaka were focused on the extent of the remaining work that needed to be done before Naia 3 could be put into commercial operation. The government earlier identified 40 construction defects in the terminal.

"We will have the money to pay Takenaka but the actual contract price is still under negotiation," said Mendoza.

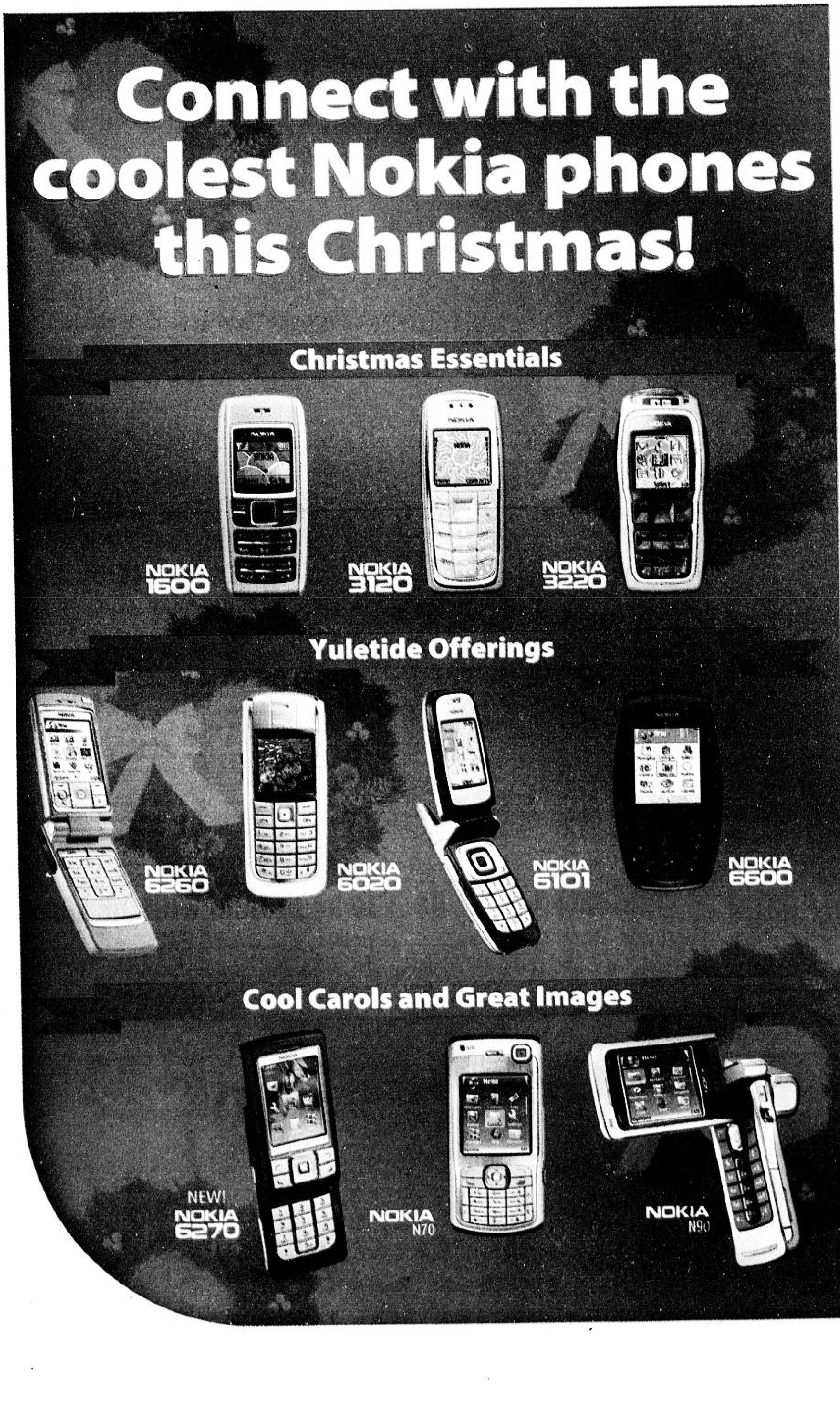
The Development Bank of the Philippines had offered to raise P27 billion for the Miaa.

Castanares said a recent British court ruling that ordered Piatco, which built Naia-3, to pay its creditors and suppliers, including Takenaka, should not adversely affect the Philippine government's plan to operate the terminal.

Also, the government has to pay Piatco before it can operate Naia 3, which it seized in December 2004.

Mendoza said that without the additional civil works that Takenaka had promised to complete, the government could not possibly open the new terminal.

The business community said the opening of Naia 3 was crucial in strengthening the Arroyo administration's credibility.



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NOKIA
Connecting People

High court asked to stop negotiators from finalizing RP-Japan deal

By Ronnel W. Domingo

SEVERAL INTEREST GROUPS AND LEGISLAtors are asking the Supreme Court to stop government negotiators from wrapping up talks on a possible free trade pact with Japan.

In a case filed last Dec. 6, party-list group Akbayan, the Pambansang Katipunan ng mga Samahan sa Kanayunan and the Alliance of Progressive Labor, along with several individuals, also asked negotiators to reveal the full text of the Japan-Philippines Economic Partnership Agreement, including offers from both sides.

Named petitioners were Representatives Loretta Ann Rosales and Risa Hontiveros-Baraquel (Akbayan); Lorenzo Tañada III (Liberal Party, 4th District, Quezon), and Emmanuel Joel J. Villanueva (Citizen's Battle Against Crime and Corruption).

The petitioners had asked the high court to issue a temporary restraining order and/or writ of preliminary injunction that would stop the respondents from "concluding the Jpepa negotiations, signing the Jpepa, and transmitting the same to the President."

Named main respondent was Trade Undersecretary Thomas G. Aquino who led the negotiating team.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita was among the 15 other respondents.

In their 54-page petition, the petitioners said the government's continuing refusal to disclose the contents of the Jpepa violates the Constitution's provision on transparency and the right to information on matters of public concern, and violates the people's constitutional right to effective and reasonable participation in all levels of social, political and economic decision-making.

"A TRO must be issued to prevent grave and irreparable injury to the Filipino people," they said.

Trade officials say local businesses stood to gain from the Jpepa as Japanese companies would be taking advantage of business opportunities in the country through tie-ups with Filipino firms.

The officials said the proposed Jpepa was expected to increase foreign direct investments and spur economic growth by generating employment, enabling technology transfer and by possibly making the Philippines an export base of Japanese companies in Southeast Asia.

Meralco expects better financial position in '05

By Abigail L. Ho

ALTHOUGH STILL EXPECTING TO INCUR A net loss this year, the Lopez-led Manila Electric Co. is expecting a better financial performance this year than last year's more than P2.6 billion in losses.

"This year's loss may not be as large as last year," Meralco president and chief operating officer Jesus Francisco told reporters yesterday.

He declined to give exact figures, however, as to how much the company's bottom line was expected to improve this year.

Also, he said the company could only get a better handle of its full-year performance once its December figures come in as these would reflect the impact of the implementation of the newly imposed value-added tax.

Meralco vice president and utility economics chief Ivanna Dela Pena added that the power distributor also had to consider the write-offs that it would have to do to comply with International Accounting Standards (IAS).

Meralco vice president and treasurer Rafael Andrada explained that the IAS compliance procedure would be done in various stages. Like some firms that had to comply with the IAS, Meralco might book some of its write-offs in advance.

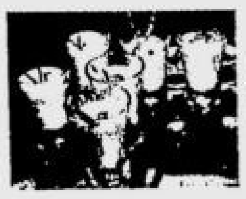
But these advanced bookings should not significantly affect the company's bottom line, he said, although overall IAS compliance would hurt or even eliminate net income during certain accounting periods.

Aside from IAS compliance requirements, Meralco had also started providing for possible losses stemming from an unfavorable Court of Appeals ruling regarding the unbundling of its rates.

The company last year suffered more than P2.6 billion in losses due to a P9.8-billion provision.

The CA last year rendered void the Energy Regulatory Commission's approval of Meralco's rates unbundling application, an order that also effectively nullified a rate increase of 17 centavos per kilowatt-hour (kWh).

Of the 17-centavo rate hike, 8.35 centavos per kWh should have gone to the National Transmission Corp. as payment for transmission charges and 8.65 centavos per kWh, to Meralco as payment for distribution charges.



A FRENCH chef comes home /C2

LIFESTYLE

sms feedback: inq … re/city/message to 2207 (Globe) and 386 (Smart)
or email us at pr_lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph

Editor Chelo Banal-Formoso

'Turon' tips and tricks

KITCHEN RESCUE

Reggie Aspiras

WE JUST CONCLUDED OUR monthly Chef's Table and Christmas Party at Lolo Dad's. If there's a menu that should be awarded the medal of excellence, this is it!

Chef Manuel did it again. Like Harry Houdini, he played up the illusion and unleashed magic with his bewitching play of flavors. No one executes the oddest of food concepts to perfection as this friend of mine does.

Consider these: Tastings of appetizers with Grilled Watermelon Salad, Sweet Salmon and Crab Roll, Escargot with Herb Butter, Scallops and Shrimp Ceviche in Rice Wrapper; Martini Cold Noodles with Ponzu Granite, Smoked Tofu and Squid Head Skewer; Gingered Duck Wing Confit, Charsieu of Duck Breast, Seared Duck Foie Gras with Chestnut Muffin and Onion Leek Kraut; Asian Chocolate Review of Two Spiced Kahlua Slush, Sesame Chocolate Fried Mochi, Coconut Milk Chocolate Ravioli, Frozen Chocolate Bananacle.

To dearest Ariel and Mia, I am not about to write some fancy phrase to describe the excellence of your Christmas menu. I refuse to give myself a tough time! What I have to say is simple, "*Nakakainis, ang sarap*!!!" Kudos to you both!

For those asking me where to go for a good meal this holiday season, Lolo Dad's is it! I've been twice since and can't wait for round three! Call 5242295/5222941.

Turon Saging

Banana (saba), sliced
Brown sugar
Oil for frying
Spring roll wrappers
Cornstarch with a bit of water, mix well—to seal *turon* after wrapping

- Coat bananas heavily in brown sugar.
- Lay on *lumpia* wrapper.
- Roll and deep fry in hot oil.

Pointers:

- The quality of your *turon* depends on the banana, so use only ripe ones to experience the fullness of its flavor.
- After wrapping bananas in spring roll wrappers, let them sit at least 30 minutes before frying. This makes the sugar sweat with the banana, causing the sugar to melt and produce a nice "caramel" crunch from the outside while keeping it nice and moist from the inside, once fried.
- Make sure that you only make one full round on the spring roll wrapper. *Turon* is never good when the wrapper is too thick.
- If you want to maintain the color of your banana and to keep it firm, brush bananas lightly with vinegar (even Datung Puti will do) before rolling them in sugar. I use Balsamic Vinegar sometimes and it works wonders too. Nice flavor.
- Make sure your oil is very hot before frying and that you have enough of it to submerge the whole *turon*.
- I like my *turon* nice and thin, much like a *lumpiang* shanghai. It stays crunchy longer and even re-heats by refrying better.

Home-based business

I'm thinking of a home-based baking business as source of income. What kind of equipment (oven, freezer/ref, mixer, pans) would you suggest for starters? Can you please include the specs, i.e. size etc? I would like to go into specialty cakes or pies. Also, where can I get cheap baking supplies (different kinds of flour/sugar, etc?) Furthermore, where should I first market my products? Schools? Neighbors? Thank you and more power to you and your column, a very interesting, refreshing and witty read.

MQM

Salamat, MQM! I took the liberty of asking Heny Sison to answer your questions. Here are her answers:

- Mini oven: Model 4P, LP Gas, four trays from Well-Done Industries (Willy Capule) 2539535 or 2932090.

The oven I bought from them in 1985 is still working and being used in my school. What I like about it is that it can bake all types of cakes, breads, cookies and pastries, and is also good for roasting *lechon de leche* and turkey. It can also accommodate big baking pans, which I use for my wedding cake orders. It has one door with rack placed in the middle layer which can be removed if you want to bake 3-D character cake or anything that will require higher room. If I want to bake a cake that is moist, I simply put a baking pan with water at the bottom layer and it produces moisture inside the oven. It can also be lined with unglazed tiles like Vigan tiles or bricks for baking pizza and crusty bread.

- To upgrade to industrial type of equipment, contact the following suppliers: Pfescorp 5311990/5311959; Gomeco

'TURON'/C3

CHEF Ariel "Houdini" Manuel creates plates of illusion and fantasy.

This Christmas, give your teens the most valuable gift — a jumpstart on money management.

BPI Express Teller International
Jumpstart
CHRIS RAMOS
New BPI Jumpstart Savings

As your teens get older and more independent, they need to learn to handle their own money. With the new BPI Jumpstart Savings Account, they can now discover the value of saving, starting with their "aguinaldos" this Christmas.

Jumpstart lets your teens and even pre-teen kids learn the basics of money management:

It teaches them the habit of saving.
You can transfer and schedule your children's allowance electronically. It is also possible to keep intact a guaranteed amount as your teens' savings. And if your kids receive cash gifts this Christmas, you can encourage them to deposit their money to their Jumpstart account.

It helps them manage their expenses.
Jumpstart allows up to four free withdrawals in a month, so your child learns how to plan his spending and manage his budget.

It empowers them.
Your teen can shop safely without cash by simply presenting his Jumpstart ATM card at over 8,200 accredited Express Payment System (EPS) establishments. He can also use his Jumpstart Card to reload his Globe or Touch Mobile prepaid cellphone.

It promotes value-for-money.
Jumpstart Savings gives your teen great discounts and privileges at popular establishments, so he can make his money go a longer way.

OPEN A JUMPSTART ACCOUNT TODAY FOR AS LOW AS ₱500.00!

You and your kids may visit any BPI or BPI Family Savings Bank branch. Or if you can't find time to bring your kids on a weekday, you may go to any of our BPI Express Banking Centers (EBCs) located in malls. Our EBCs are open beyond banking hours and even on weekends.

Enjoy privileges at the following **Jumpstart Zones:**

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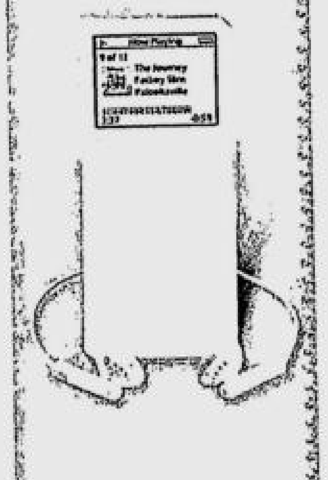

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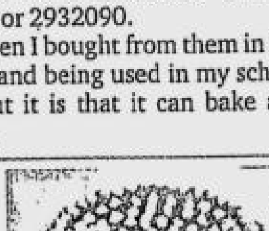

Dulcelin's Mango Torte Extraordinaire

With glowing reviews from food critics for its fabulous crispy chewy nougatine crust, this is the perfect dessert for the holidays.

Our dishes are uncompromisingly made with the best ingredients that make our products a truly rewarding taste experience.

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Callebaut Ganache Cake
Food for the Gods
Irish Cream Butter Cake
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Paella
Chicken Relleno
Hickory Smoked Pork Belly
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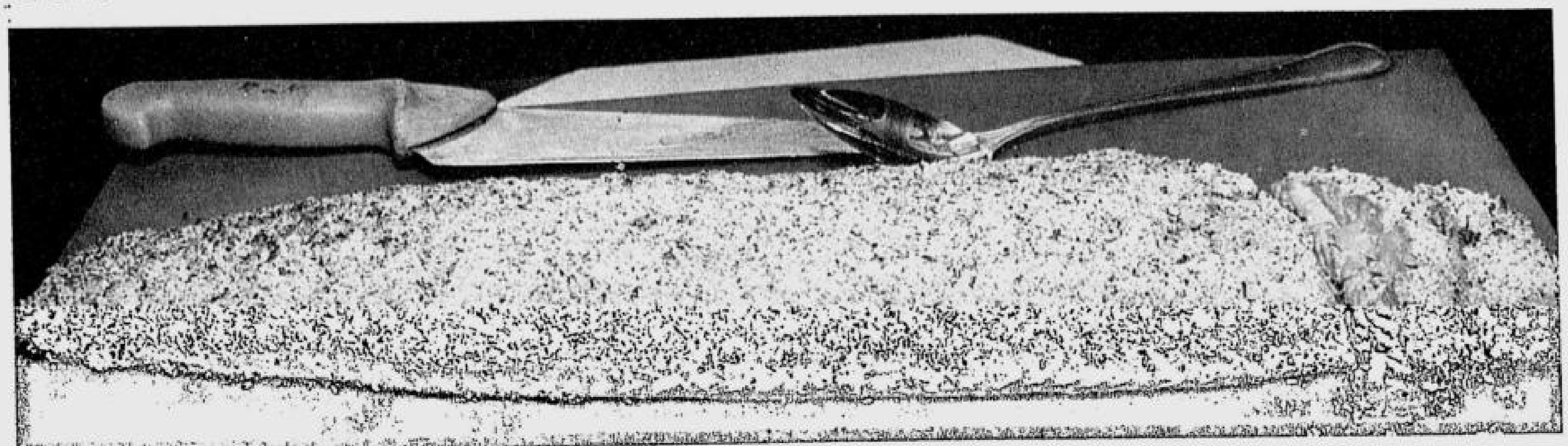
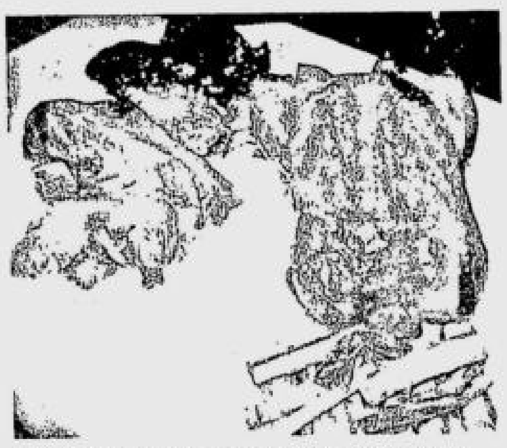
DULCELIN GOURMET: 30 Times St., West Triangle, QC and soon to open at Tiendesitas, Libis. Tel. 374-2165/67, 0917-535-2502



ROASTED Salmon Trout Fillet with Herbs and Peppercorn Crust

Jean Pierre Migne has made a name for his innovative, even surprising, renditions of regional French food

Returning chef finds a new 'home'



ROASTED Duck with Half Pita Bread and Grilled Leek

JEAN Pierre Migne, Diamond Hotel new executive chef

Text by Vangie Baga-Reyes
Photos by Betoy Johnson

AFTER BEING AWAY FOR THREE years keeping abreast of culinary developments in France and further honing his craft, renowned chef Jean Pierre Migne is back as the new executive chef of Diamond Hotel Philippines.

Prior to his sabbatical, Migne had already established a reputation in Manila's culinary scene for his innovative, even surprising, renditions of regional French food, as well as Asian specialties.

He was also credited for leading the Manila Garden Hotel team in winning gold medallions in several Chefs on Parade competitions in the late '80s.

"I am happy to be back working in Manila after living in France updating my skills," said the baby-faced French chef. "I am very pleased and honored to have been given the chance to work for Diamond Hotel."

Migne, who has worked as executive chef in luxury hotels in Shanghai, Beijing, Jakarta, Kuwait and Sharjah (United Arab Emirates), has prepared banquets for heads of states, including United States President George Bush, the King and Queen of Spain, and the Sheikh of Kuwait.

He became the culinary adviser and executive chef-in-charge, in collaboration with Manila Hotel, of the 1996 Asia-Pacific Economic Conference in Manila, preparing state dinners for then US President Bill Clinton and 17 other heads of states.

Before leaving for France, Migne ran his own culinary consulting company in the Philippines. He has been married for 18 years to Filipina Louie Calasanz, Avon Philippines' senior public relations manager. They have two children, Gianina and Jonathan.

A celebration

Migne was formally introduced to the public and media in a recent appreciation cocktail dubbed "Le Toque Christmas" held at Galaxias, which overlooks Manila Bay.

Over a lavish buffet spread of Smoked Chicken Breast with mango salpicon, Adobong Crispy Pigeon on Gingered Basmati Rice, Smoked Salmon on Apple Wedges with horseradish lemon cream, Mascarpone Cauliflower Cream with salmon roe, Roasted Salmon Trout fillet with herbs and peppercorn crust, Lapu-lapu Sliced in Black Beans Sauce and Kinchay and Scallops in Chicken Broth with banana blossom, Migne was presented by Diamond Hotel's general manager Kazutaka Igarashi.

"I recognize many friends and familiar faces that are used to my thick French accent," quipped Migne, who seemed to be glad to be back in harness.

"The food trend in Europe is towards more down to earth dishes using ingredients of the highest quality and freshness. I honestly think that, for many years, chefs have been trying too hard to cook dishes with very complicated names and tastes that, often, our customers get lost in our creations."

He added, "In Diamond, my style of menus and cooking will be based on a simpler but tastier gastronomy. Our markets in Manila are full of fantastic local products so let's use them."

Teamwork

Migne trains his kitchen staff like a father bringing up his own children. That evening, he paid tribute to these "behind-the-scenes-heroes" and proudly introduced them to guests.

He stressed the importance of teamwork "to be able to reach our goals. We need each other to succeed."

He thanked the hotel's president, Cecile Ang, for "the privilege to lead the hardworking kitchen brigade of Diamond Hotel."

Working under Migne are chef Rolando Victoria and Rodel Cruz and Carlos Navarro, who are in charge of the kitchen and service, respectively at the Palm Court Café. At Bellevue and Sky Lounge, the dining room will be under the care of Marge Morando and the kitchen under chef Hobert Fernandez.

For the evening's party, cold dishes were prepared by a team headed by chef Egay Gomez. Dishes from the hot kitchen were under the supervision of chefs in charge Dado Barnigo and Edgar Miranda. They were assisted by chef butcher Nestor Odejar.

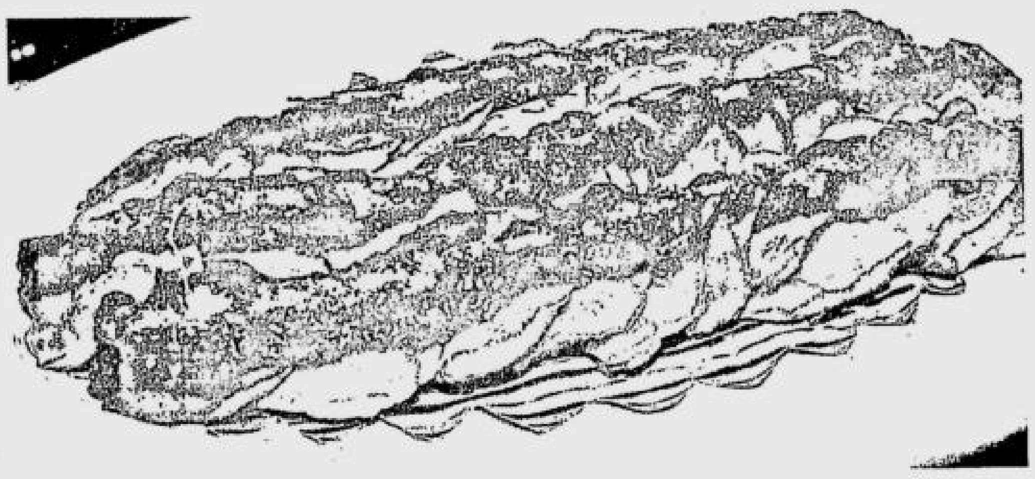
Chefs Sonny Magsombol in bakery and Robert Mempin in pastry prepared the dessert buffet.

Making sure everything was in proper order was Tesz Maristela, Diamond's service banquet manager.

Migne will also supervise Yurakuen, the hotel's Japanese restaurant managed by Shinji Sato and under chef Junichi Sekiyama assisted by chef Raymond Balota.

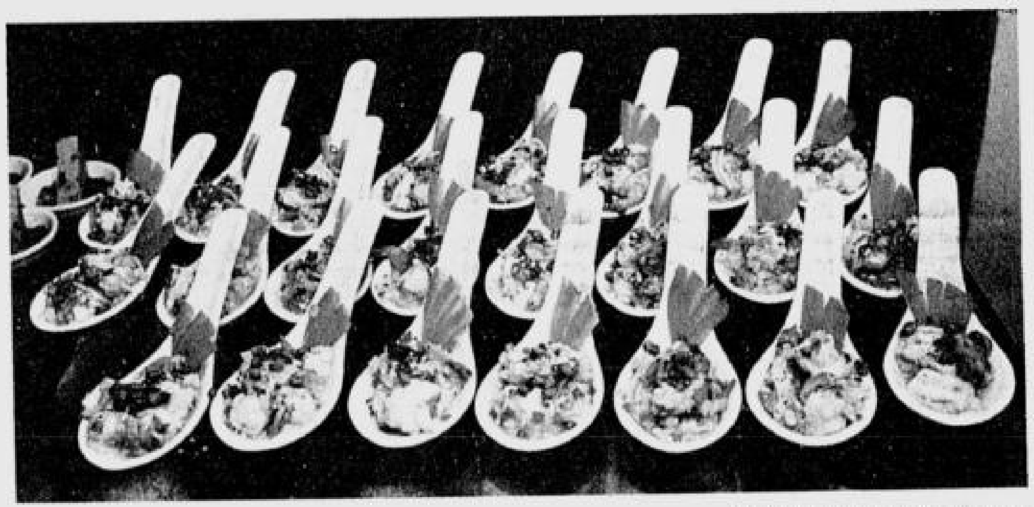
Migne will be assisted in running the hotel's food outlets by executive sous chef and "my right hand" Nick Torres.

E-mail the author at vbaga@inquirer.com.ph.



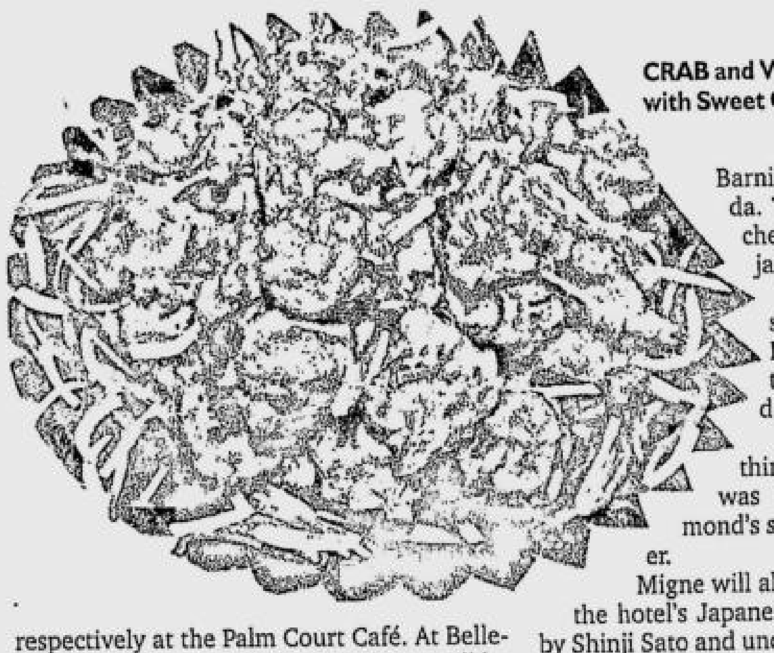
LAPU-LAPU Piccata with Tomato-Olive Salsa

ENGLISH Cream Truffle

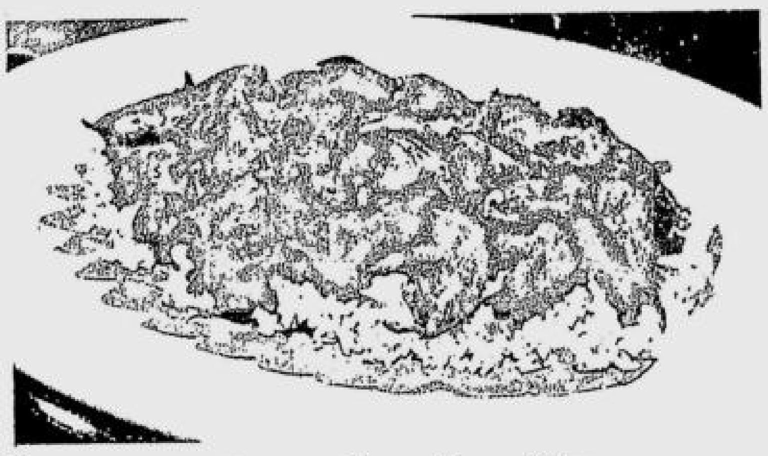


SHRIMP Kilawin on Spoon

BAKED Potatoes "Tartiflette" with Bacon and Cheese in souffle dish



CRAB and Vegetable Accra with Sweet Curry Sauce



ADOBONG Crispy Pigeon on Gingered Basmati Rice

How to make a holiday ham in 9 steps

CDO, A LEADING PRODUCER OF processed meat, uses a nine-step process to make its zesty Holiday Ham.

1. Pork leg meats are carefully evaluated physically, chemically and microbiologically by quality assurance personnel. Meats have to come only from slaughterhouses accredited with the National Meat Inspection Commission of the Department of Agriculture.

2. Trimming removes unwanted parts of the meat, such as ligaments, skin and bones, excess fat.

3. The trimmed meat is flavored by injecting it with a brine solution. An automatic injector machine pumps and distributes evenly the solution into the ham to enhance its color and flavor.

The ham is then kept in a curing room with a controlled temperature, allowing the ingredients to react with meat pigments creating a pinkish red color.

CDO Holiday Ham

4. Cured meat then undergoes massaging in a tumbler machine or massager. The meat is tenderized gently without rupturing the muscle to retain the juices and flavor.

5. The meat is then stuffed in a net to form the shape of the ham and smoked in a hot chamber with controlled humidity and temperature to extend meat's shelf life.

6. The smoked ham is cooked in a special solution that gives it the distinctive taste of CDO Holiday Ham. The process also makes CDO hams ready to serve, unlike other products that have to be cooked first.

7. The ham is cooled in a chiller and the net removed.

8. The cooked ham is glazed with sugar then exposed to high temperature to caramelize the sugar. The ham is then packed using a vacu-thermal pouch to seal in the freshness.

9. Packed ham is stored in a chiller for immediate cooling.

Call 2941111.

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18 years of first-rate tapa

TAPA KING CELEBRATES ITS 18th year with an expansion effort that launches a sassy new look for its stores and exciting new meals to satisfy the palate of Filipino diners here and abroad.

The new look of Tapa King, unveiled at the recent opening of its Park Square branch in Makati, communicates a more global outlook and will soon be represented in its local and international branches. The Park Square store features a modern-minimalist look that plays with color and textures in a tasteful way.

Red and yellow are interspersed across the 44-sq m floor area, while one side is covered with a huge mirror to create the illusion of space. Beside it is a wall finished with multicolored tiles.

THE FRIENDLY staff of Tapa King Park Square

At this branch, the menu board also gets the spotlight—literally—with bright lights illuminating the pictured Tapa King dishes above the counter, making them more appetizing for diners.

The new look is part and parcel of Tapa King's expansion efforts which include the opening of new stores at Commonwealth, Visayas Avenue, Libis, RCBC Tower, Harbor View and Rosario in Batangas, raising the total number of branches to 22. There are also plans to franchise Tapa King in the United States.

Tapa King continues to serve its classic Tapa meals, beefed up with new salad selections and favorite *meryenda* fare. For franchising, call 5348276.

Chocolate poolside and gingerbread house

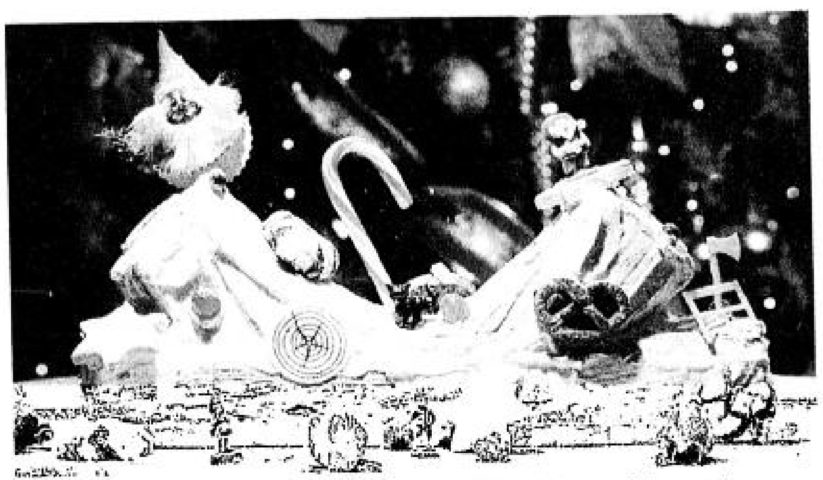
A FANTASTIC CHOCOLATE DISPLAY awaits you at The Westin Philippine Plaza.

See the replica of the hotel's famous poolside in real chocolate surrounded by Santa's elves, whimsical candy décor and a mini gingerbread house at the Lobby Lounge. At The Café Plaza Too, the Santa's Amazing Pastry Workshop centerpiece will welcome guests.

Until Dec. 31, a Christmas feast featuring all the best selections at our popular Café Plaza Too will be served at the buffet. These include prime roast carvings of traditional Christmas Honey Glazed Ham, Roasted Turkey, Lechon and Pritchon, Irish Spiced Beef on certain evenings, Japanese Sushi and Sashimi.

Also offered are Chinese specialties such as Peking Duck, Chinese Soups and different types of unique dimsum.

Diners would also find a healthy selection of salads and appetizers, as well as indulge in mouthwatering desserts, including ice cream, cakes, and pastries.



THE CHRISTMAS Log Cake is just one of Westin's special pastries for the season.

Local treats such as *bibingka* and *puto bumbong* will be available for breakfast, lunch, dinner and a la carte. Chocoholics can have their fill at the chocolate buffet on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. Also available are the best-selling sugar-free goodies.

Drink of the Month is St. Nick. With the taste of the tropics and the colors of Christmas, it is made from Malibu and Midori giving it a refreshing coconut and melon flavor.

At 6:30-7 p.m. until Dec. 22, enjoy the cherubic voices of various children's choirs from some of Manila's best schools at the Lobby Lounge.

'Turon' . . .

From page C1

2924421/2924578; Ruey Shing 41142-32/7279648; Besterm 8329231-33.

They are reliable and easy to deal with; that is why I recommend them to my students and clients for consultancy projects. Same suppliers carry heavy-duty but reasonably priced four-door type chiller freezer.

- Mixer: Kitchen Aid Mixer Professional 5 Plus. For more details you can search everythingkitchenaid.com. My kitchen store located in my school sells Kitchen Aid, accessories, baking pans and ingredients.
- Baking pans: Sto. Cristo, Divisoria.
- Wholesale ingredients: Killion Merchandising 7338221/7337036. Flour, all kinds: San Miguel Purefoods 6716044. Flavoring and cocoa powder: Ferna 2515529. Confectioners' sugar: Penco 2448925.
- Where to market your goods? Why not try both the schools and the neighborhood? I started by giving samples to friends and neighbors. Through word of mouth I got more orders. Once you have the confidence and have mastered the making of your products, you may start selling in school, companies and friends.

Heny, *maraming salamat*! I truly appreciate your help!

E-mail the author at raspiras@inquirer.com.ph

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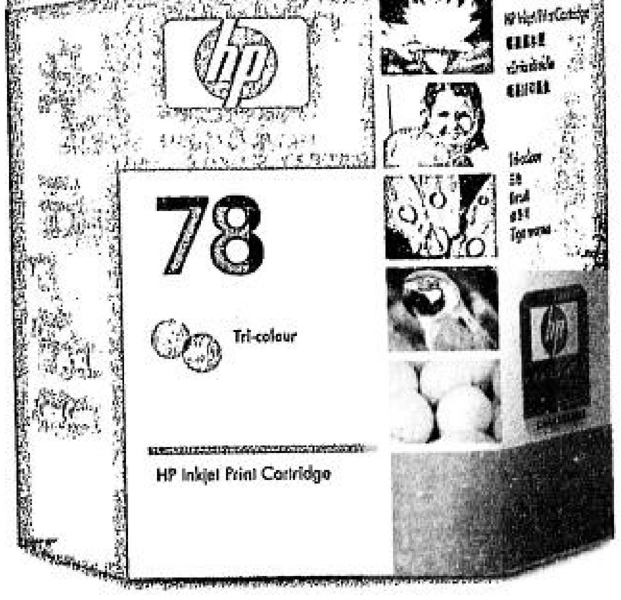

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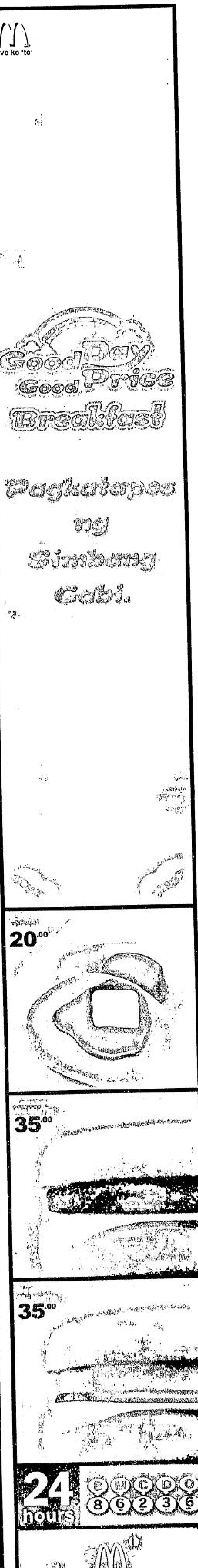
Per DTI NCR Permit No. 2226, Series of 2005.



Curtains and Pillows by ARQ

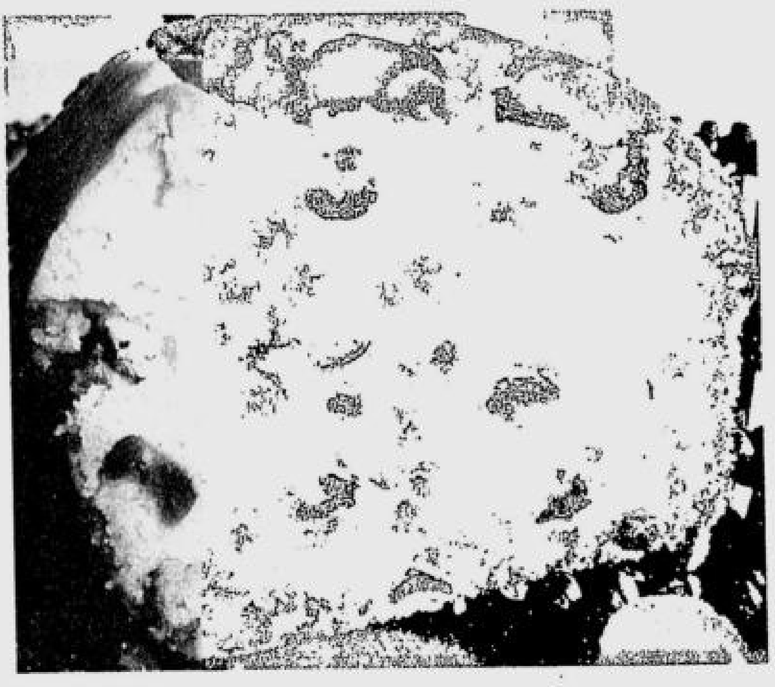
our Home

HOLIDAY STEAK AND SEAFOOD TREAT

Grilled steak and seafood are served every week night at Lola Maria, The Legend Villas' coffeeshop and restaurant, until Dec. 31. Choose from prime cuts of beef, pork tenderloin, lamb, porkchop, chicken fillet or succulent seafood like squid, prawns, salmon belly and *tanigue*. The steak-seafood special includes a trip to the salad bar and a glass of wine for only P288++. Nightly live entertainment of flute and acoustic guitar add to your dining experience. Lola Maria also offers lunch buffet on weekdays and à la carte on weekends. Visit The Legend Villas at 60 Pioneer corner Madison Sts., Mandaluyong City or call 6331501/10.

WINE GIFT PACK

Outback Restaurant offers Down Under "Holiday Gift Ideas." The Outback Wine Gift Pack comes in a wooden case containing a bottle of red or white wine for only P875. The Wooden Bread Board Set, only P295, includes three rolls of the Bushman bread plus a wooden bread board. Also available are Outback gift checks in P250, P500 or P1,000. Visit Outback branches in Libis, Glorietta and Alabang Town Center.



NEW HOLIDAY FRUITCAKE

Ju.D Lao, best known for her fruitcakes, has come up with the all-new Ju.D Ginger-Cranberry Cake for the holiday season.

The latest addition to the Ju.D Fruitcake family is a golden honey cake studded with succulent red cranberries.

Ju.D's Ginger-Cranberry Cake was informally introduced at a small public charity bazaar in Le Pavilion a few weeks ago.

Visit Ju.D at 50 Greenmeadows Ave., Valle Verde area, or call 6331188.

PhotoDV

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Delighting You Always

The world's slimmest and smallest DVD camcorder.
Form and function perfected.

New | DC20

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- Easy one-touch functions
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DC20 and DC10 are the slimmest and smallest Megapixel DVD Camcorders as of October 2005.

Insist on an original warranty issued by Canon Marketing (Philippines), Inc.

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PictBridge Super Slim Design One-Touch Dubbing Random Access & Easy Editing DIGIC DV DVD R/RW

A versatile gift

THINKING OF GIFTS OR GIVEaways for the Christmas season?

Why not go for canned goods, specifically Spam luncheon meat? Spam is convenient and versatile, with a long shelf-life.

In Korea, Spam has become as welcome a gift as jewelry or premium whiskey. It is sold in stylish gift boxes of nine cans each.

Koreans reportedly consider Spam luncheon meat the perfect choice for a gift, living up to its name as the Miracle Meat. It can be fried, sautéed, rolled, or used as garnish. You can eat it hot or cold sliced, diced, or cubed for breakfast, lunch, dinner, or snacks.

In Manila, the various possibilities of Spam are showcased in two outlets of the innovative Spamjam Café.

Spam luncheon meat, which has so far sold over six billion cans, now comes in eight variants available in leading supermarkets nationwide—Classic, Lite, Garlic, Turkey, Hickory Smoked, Barbeque, Spicy and Cheese.

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Finally, a real Filipino hot cocoa store

NANA Meng Tsokolate seeks to educate customers on real *tsokolate e!, tsokolate a!*

meaningless
PIGS WITH PEARLS
a world to discover

WHAT'S ON AT ROBINSONS

Catch the newest band in town as they perform live at the Robinsons Malls.

Pigs with Pearls
Promo Mall Tour

ROBINSONS Malls
www.robinsonsmalls.com

Glowing chocolate memories

By Margaux Salcedo
Contributor

SIMBANG GABI, PAROL, "ANG Pasko ay Sumapit" sung through your car window by street kids, *puto bumbong*, and a really good cup of Nana Meng's hot *tsokolate*. These complete Christmas for me in the Philippines.

My favorite is the cup of real hot chocolate. I was introduced to this tradition by Nana Meng, my grand-aunt, now the only living offspring of our Ingkong Luis and Impong Doña from Sta. Maria, Bulacan.

Every morning, Nana Meng's kitchen would have hot chocolate made from scratch, i.e., from bean to froth, using not the ordinary powdered type of hot chocolate you simply mix in hot water or milk (somehow powdered chocolate inevitably leaves a flat taste, even if you use high-quality Belgian chocolate), instead using freshly ground cocoa.

Nana Meng herself would pick out the cocoa beans, separating the good ones from ones not so, grind them using a stone grinder to create a very fine, or "pino," paste-like chocolate substance, then cook this mixture in boiling water, adding in sugar and milk.

Once the whole thing is cooked, she would transfer the fresh *tsokolate* to a *tsokolatera*, a pitcher specifically meant for hot chocolate, and bring it to a froth using the *batidor*, a wooden whisk.

I would then enjoy the *tsokolate* with Bulacan hot *pandesal*, *kesong puti* or carabao cheese, *puto pandan*, and *suman inantala*, which I would dip in the most delicious coconut syrup. Everything made from scratch, everything deliciously rich.

I would leave Bulacan with five pounds tucked under my belt. Nevertheless I would be deliriously satisfied because, as I realized in 2004, nowhere else in the world is there *tsokolate* the way the Tagalogs make it!

The search

I can say this because I have done the search. I have gone all around New York (where I used to live) in search of this *tsokolate* I grew up with.

I found interesting varieties. There is French hot chocolate at Payard on the Upper East Side, which is delicately rich, very smooth and only slightly sweet. There is Mexican hot chocolate by Jacques Torres over at Dumbo, which plays with your tongue with its hint of chili.

Then of course, there is American hot chocolate at the City Bakery and @SQC, which is very sweet and very rich, obsessively served in a mug and a half with a fist of whipped cream.

Nowhere, though, was there Bulacan hot chocolate or *tsokolate* the way Nana Meng would serve it in our ancestral home. I therefore concluded that this indigenized—as Doreen Fernandez would call it—drink is 100 percent unique to the Philippines!

Indigenous drink

I realized, in fact, a mere breakdown of the chocolate's characteristics should tell you this. Unlike American or Spanish hot chocolate, Bulacan hot chocolate is not obsessively thick or *malapot*. It is served in a cup or *taza*, not an espresso or demitasse cup. Further, it may be gulped down by impatient fanatics like myself and not merely be used as a dip for *churros*.

It's rich although not sticky thick. You feel the pounding caused by pure cocoa halfway down the cup, kicking you to life, because the *tsokolate* is cooked from its raw, as opposed to powdered, state.

Then you feel an extra jolt because of a

GLOWING/ D2

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Pasha de Cartier collection Cartier

Glowing chocolate memories

From page D1

distinct ingredient particular only to Bulakeñas and Pampangeños, which hits you two seconds after swallowing the concoction: peanuts! The Tagalogs, whose flair for cooking is integral to their culture, brilliantly combine cocoa with peanuts to add flavor and texture to this otherwise already perfect drink!

The result is a passionate drink, full of life and a spirit of gaiety; a drink with soul. People often miss this element when they serve or have their hot chocolate, mistaking soul for sweet.

But Nana Meng Tsokolate, which is finally available to the public via their very old world Spanish-Filipino themed kiosks, does not miss this element. In fact, it lives and breathes to tell people that their hot chocolate must have soul.

First ever

The first ever Filipino hot chocolate store, Nana Meng Tsokolate, which opened in malls only this year, seeks to educate customers on real hot chocolate: *tsokolate e!*, *tsokolate a!*, the Bulacan hot chocolate or the Original Tsokolate Filipino, and other varieties such as the Special Cashew Tsokolate, which uses cashew nuts instead of peanuts.

The store, although it also serves Filipino pastries or *kakanin* that go with the *tsokolate* such as the *puto pandan* and *suman* (also cooked the old way), does not as yet operate as a restaurant. It focuses purely on the art of hot *tsokolate*.

And indeed, Nana Meng has *tsokolate* down to an art form. No other store, restaurant or café makes Bulacan and other traditional hot chocolate versions like Nana Meng's, even if you may easily buy *tabliyas* from the grocery store.

The secret? Nana Meng creates *tsokolate* from bean to froth, as Nana Meng has done since the early 1900s. The process begins not from the boiling of water but from the selection of cocoa beans.

The result is a *tsokolate* experience that goes from your head to your heart to your soul, as a good cup of real hot chocolate should.

BOTTLED *tsokolate* paste

THREE generations of Tsokolate girls: the author, her Nana Meng and her mom Baby Salcedo

Jars of 'tsokolate'

From this experience, you'll most likely want to bring home several bottles of the *tsokolate* paste (which are unsweetened, by the way) to serve at Noche Buena or to share with friends, relatives, doctors, and anyone who has ever been nice to you!

Jars of the *tsokolate* mixture and hot chocolate gift packages with the *tsokolatera* and *batidor* are sold at the kiosks and may be ordered in bulk. Now that would be spreading Christmas cheer and that would truly make it a delightful and complete Filipino Christmas!

Nana Meng Tsokolate is at Glorietta 4, 3/L (near Food Choices), Makati; at the Market! Market! Activity Center (beside the elevator); at Salcedo Market on Saturdays (facing Leviste Street, Salcedo Village); and at 9667 Pililia St., Makati City.

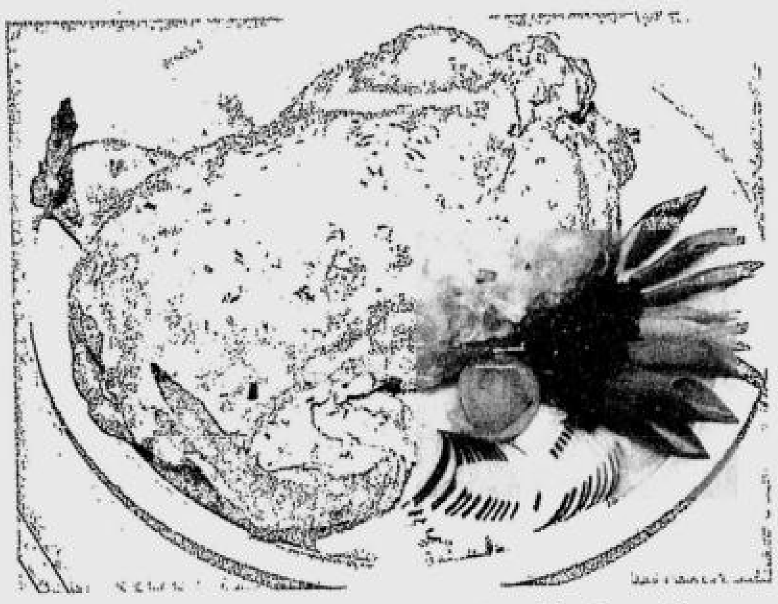
Call 8909562 or mobile 0920-9023216 or 0917-8339539. Visit www.nanameng.com or e-mail nana.meng@gmail.com.

E-mail the author at smilingfilipino.blogspot.com.

Shrimp combos available till Jan. 31

T.G.I. FRIDAY'S Jack Daniel's Shrimp Combo Platters are available until Jan. 31. Combining classic entrees with a sweet and smokey Jack Daniel's sauce, diners will have five choices: the Jack Daniel's Roasted Chicken Combo, Cajun Shrimp and Chargrilled Chicken served with oven-roasted tomatoes and rice pilaf; Glazed Ribs Combo, Friday's Baby Ribs and Cajun Shrimps with Cajun onion rings as sidings; Cajun Shrimps and Salmon Fillet chargrilled and battered with Friday's special glaze, served with green beans, oven-roasted tomatoes and rice pilaf; Jack Daniel's Pork Chop Combo, shrimps and chargrilled porkloin chops, green beans, oven-roasted tomatoes and rice pilaf; and Steak Combo. Call Friday's Glorietta 3 (7527685); Alabang Town Center (8429372); Hotel Rembrandt, QC (3728497/8539); Robinsons Place Manila (5265334); and Sta. Lucia East (6827047).

CONGO GRILLE opened recently its newest branch at the G/L of the new SM City in Valenzuela City, coinciding with the inauguration of the new SM Supermall on McArthur Highway in Valenzuela City. It accepts reservations for Christmas parties and other occasions and offers full-catering services and party packages for delivery or take out for groups of 50 to 500 people.



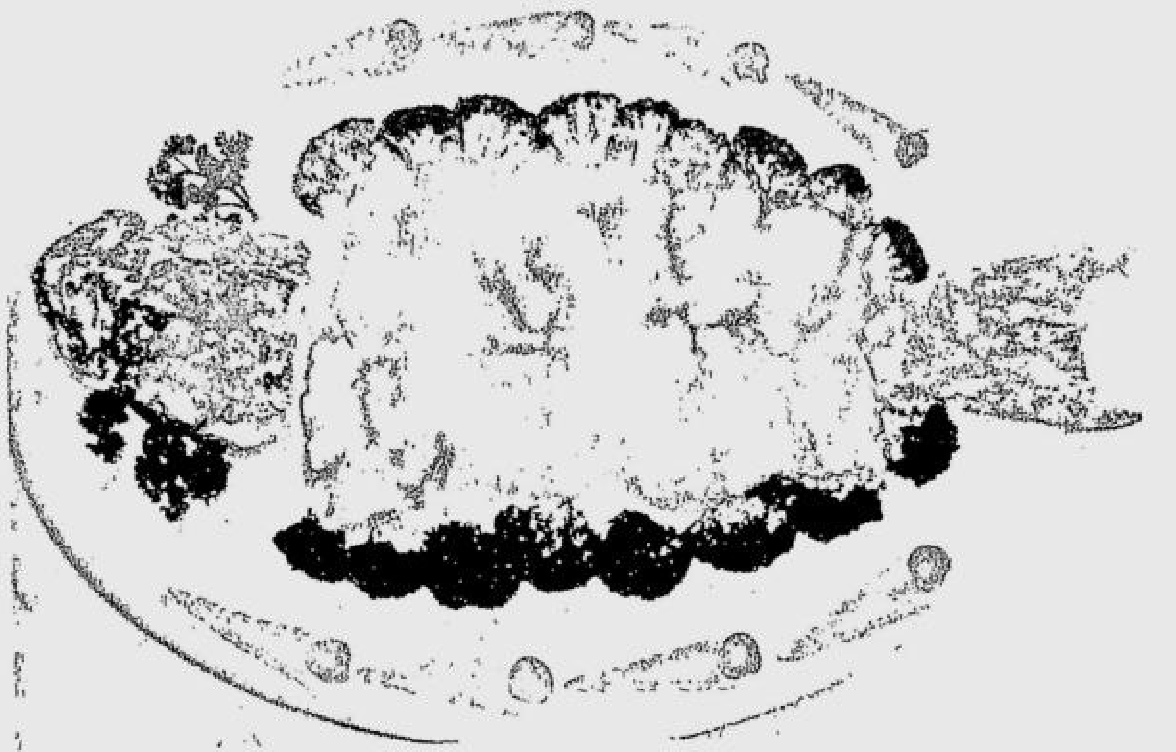
BLUE BAY Buffet by the Bay offers "Pamaskong Handog ng Blue Bay." Every family or group of five automatically gets a free homemade specialty. One dines for free in every group of 15 or more. Blue Bay, at South Road cor. Parade Street, Rizal Park, Ermita, Manila, has a buffet of Filipino and international dishes. Call 5250514/4007437.

DENCIO'S has new pica-pica dishes for dinner or *pulutan* like deep-fried Talong Chips with sabrina sauce, deep-fried Krispy Kangkong served with a special vegetable dip, and Dencio's Chicharon (pork *liempo* strips breaded and fried and served with vinegar, garlic and hot chili).

Dencio's has branches in Scout Albano, Capitol Hills, Camp John Hay, Rockwell, Jupiter, Canlubang, Metrowalk, Las Piñas, SM Baguio, Eastwood, Paseo de Roxas, Brittany Bay, Robinsons Ermita, Cultural Center of the Philippines complex, SM Megamall, Araneta Center, Paseo de Magallanes, Banawe, Luisita Center. Soon to open are branches in Subic, The Fort and Connecticut in Greenhills.

DUSIT Hotel offers traditional native delicacies, such as *puto bumbong* and *bibingka*, at the hotel's Lobby Lounge until Jan. 4. Take-out orders are accepted 3-9 p.m.

KIMPURA Japanese Restaurant will give diners two complimentary Yakimeshi orders for a minimum P2,000+ order of teppanyaki dishes (except the combination specials). The offer is available lunch and dinner until Dec. 30. Kimpura is open for dinner on Christmas Day and lunch and dinner on New Year's Day. It has branches at Greenhills Shopping Center, San Juan (7218816/8869) and 2/L Glorietta 2, Ayala Center, Makati City



JADE Garden offers "One Happy Holiday Feast" lauriat set, good for 12 persons. It includes four kinds of appetizer, birds of paradise, Braised Shark's Fin Soup with Crabmeat and Bamboo-pith, Pink Lapu-lapu with Creamy Shrimp Sauce, Braised fish-maw with Imported Mushrooms, Grilled King Prawns with O.K. Sauce, Stir-fried Diced Mutton with X.O. Sauce, Steamed Crabs with Egg in "Shao Shin" wine, Rice topping with Seafood and Abalone, Hot sweetened almond puree with dumpling, and fresh fruit platter for dessert. Jade Garden is at Greenbelt 1, Ayala Center, Makati City. Open for lunch and dinner. Call 8124548 or 8922319. The restaurant is open for dinner on Christmas Day and lunch and dinner on New Year's Day.

(8932307/8924456).

DINING OUT

THE SEAFOOD Club at the 2/L of Greenbelt 3 presents the Fairy Tale Buffet until Dec. 3, with a lunch and dinner buffet daily for P399+ and grand dinner buffet Friday and Saturday nights for P575+. Main courses include beef, chicken, pork, pasta, and seafood. Call 7574129.

RED Kimono opened recently at the Fort Strip in Fort Bonifacio Global City. Specializing in "modern Japanese cuisine," it serves old favorites like maki, sushi, sashimi and tempura, as well as crabstick rolls with wasabi mayo, salmon and cream cheese maki and California crunch maki, a variation of California maki wrapped in tempura batter, fried and served hot. For main course, it offers chicken teriyaki with potato hay , grilled *lapu-lapu* with *wakame* salad and, for vegetarians, tofu steak with asparagus and shiitake mushrooms. Red Kimono is at Unit 1A, G/F Fort Strip, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig. Call 8166642.

PEKING Garden offers "Our Toast to Christmas," a special set menu for 12. The 10-course lauriat consists of four kinds of appetizer, braised shark's fin soup with crab roe, Peking duck, tiger prawns in spicy sauce, braised sliced abalone with vegetable, steamed fish fillet with preserved olive, steamed crabs with beer, steamed supreme soup and pork dumpling, soufflé balls with mashed bean and banana, chilled mango shake with sago—all for P12,800+.
The restaurant is open for dinner on Christmas Day and for lunch and dinner on New Year's Day. Peking Garden is at 2/L Glorietta 2, Ayala Center, Makati City. Call 8179066/67.

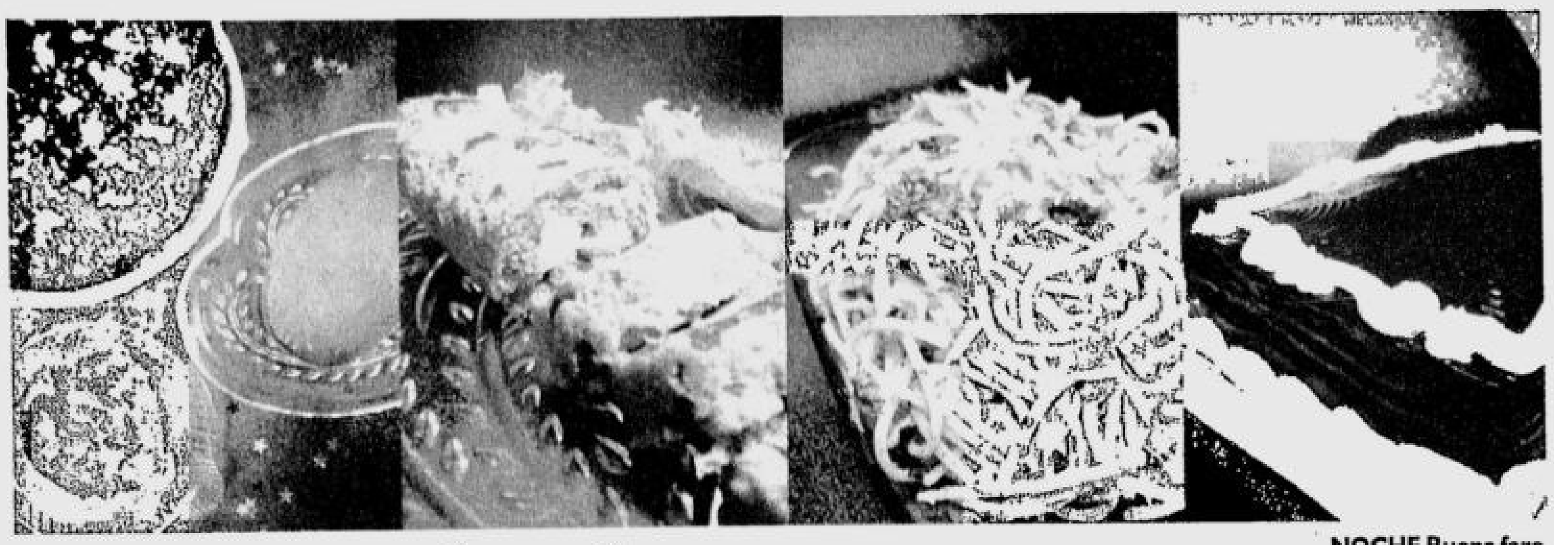
HYATT Regency Manila offers holiday specials for Christmas and New Year. Until Dec. 31, a gingerbread house will be open in the hotel lobby with Christmas goodies and sweets. Café Al Fresco serves a special Christmas Eve buffet dinner at P1,200+ per person, and special Christmas day brunch at P1,100+ per person. It offers a special New Year's Eve set dinner at P1,200+ per person, and a special New Year's day brunch at P1,100+ per person. Tempura Misono Japanese Restaurant's own special Christmas Eve buffet is available for P1,200+ per person, and special Christmas day brunch buffet for P1,100+ per person. The special New Year's Eve buffet dinner costs P1,200+ per person, and special New Year's day brunch buffet P1,100+ per person. Hyatt also offers the Banquet Christmas Packages for Christmas and New Year parties. Call the catering sales office at 8331234 locals 8070/71.

CHRISTMAS BUFFET
For 12 days leading to Christmas, the Bellevue Hotel offers different kebab items and homey buffet selections. From Dec. 15-25, treat your palate to a new adventure every day and your ears to live jazz music. On Dec. 24 and 25, the Tala Children's Choir will perform. Holiday carvings as well as other special dishes will be offered. Call 7718181.

RICHMONDE Hotel offers traditional Christmas favorites like the holiday fruitcake at P275 net, cookies, pastries and other sweet treats. The Yuletide offerings are available until Jan 1. Call 6387777 local 3732.

CROWNE Plaza Galleria Manila's Xin Tian Di's Christmas banquet of classic Chinese delicacies includes shark's fin soup, spring rolls, honey soy chicken and other dishes plus the traditional roast duck. Some of the desserts are mango pudding, sweetened pear-shaped dumplings with egg custard, almond jelly and Chinese petit-fours. Call 6337222 local 7240.

KARATE Kid offers Rice Meals, Oishi Saver Meals (good for two) with rice-all-you-can Beef Teppanyaki, Ika Fry Saver, Chicken Teppanyaki, Sizzling Tofu Steak, and Snacku Meals, among others. Karate Kid has branches at Robinson's Place Manila, SM City Fairview-Annex, SM City Centerpoint Sta. Mesa, SM City San Lazaro, SM City Manila and SM City Sucat-Annex.



NOCHE Buena fare

DELECTABLE nibblers

Indulgence comes in pretty boxes

Text and Photos by Zee Castro
2bU! Correspondent

AS THE 25TH FAST APproaches, surely some people are still clueless about what gifts to give away for the holidays. Here's a big hint: The key is to figure out which treat goes well with whom!

Indulge in some Noche Buena fare

Filipino delicacies. Homemade Biko, P200/small *bilao*; Ube Halaya, P85/500 ml; Leche Flan, P86/500 ml. Order from A&A, 176 Tagaytay Rd. Justinville Subd., Bacoor, Cavite. Call (046) 5719874 or 0919-7231865.

Pork Embutido—sausage, cheese, hard-boiled eggs, raisins combined in a special pork mixture, P150. Order from Qitchen. Call 7215360 or 0917-8312238. Visit qitchen.blogspot.com.

Spicy Spaghetti—Just the right tad of hot, P400 (good for 12); P750 (good for 20). Order from Valerie's. Call 9267816, 4141954 or 0918-6988376).

Chocolate Cake, perfect size for family gatherings, P600. Order from The Pastry Shop, 8 St. Luke St., Horseshoe Village, Cubao, QC. Call 7247309 or 7270958.

Savory delight

Love and Quiches, P275/box of five. Available flavors: Chicken Peppers and Broccoli, Hungarian Sausage and Spinach, Ham Salami and Mushroom, Longganisa and Kesong Puti, Salmon Asparagus and Cream Cheese, Vegetables and Olives, Seafood and Cheese. Order from Apple's Kitchen. Call 7269820 or 7247868.

Healthy options

Perfect for the health-conscious. The taste of regular pastries without the guilt! Splenda-based, made of low-fat ingredients. Cookies are made of whole-wheat flour. Decadent Chocolate Cake, P100/dozen (larger sizes available). Chocolate-chip cookies, P240/dozen. Cinnamon Sugar cookies, P160/dozen. Order from Kitchen Real, 87 Real St. Urdaneta Village, Makati. Call 8132325, 8106501 or 0917-8106414.

Divine decadence

Treasured family recipes. White Chocolate Banana Cream Pie, P550, Oz Café, UP Bahay ng Alumni, Magsaysay Rd., UP Diliman, QC. Call 6580091 or 0920-9073219.

CAKE culture

ALL DRESSED up

Go for delicious gifts. You will never go wrong

Tocino del Cielo, a piece of sweet indulgence, P15/piece, minimum of 50 pieces; NY-Style Cheesecake, creamy and divine. P1,560/nine-inch cake. Order from Dessert Trolley, 6 Guiho St. Molave Park Subd., Parañaque. Call 8210035 or 0920-9251200. E-mail addie.guanzon@gmail.com

Apple Crumble Pie, P500. Oz Café. Call 0920-9073219.

Cake culture

Yummy cakes sure to satiate dessert cravings. Strawberry Cream. P500/six-inch, Kitchen Real. Call 8132325 or 8106501.

Cookie Monster Chocolate Cake. P850/nine-inch, Dessert Trolley. Call 8210035 or 0920-9251200.

Coffee Crunch, P450/six-inch, Kitchen Real. Call 8132325 or 8106501.

Solo surprise

Perfect as individual gifts. Choco, Apple and Pear Quiche. P55/single. Apple's Kitchen, 581 Wack Wack Rd., Mandaluyong. Call 0917-8436574, 7269820 or 7247868.

Oreo Express Chiffon Cake, Triple Chocolate Cake Signature Series. Nestlé Crunch Chiffon Cake, P60/singles, larger sizes available. Order from MCakes. Call 0917-8550171.

Delectable nibblers

Yummy chewy treats. Rhum Loaf, P70, Valerie's. Call 0918-6988376.

Banana Walnut Loaf, P150, Apple's Kitchen. Call 0917-8436574.

Macaroons, P90/box of 20, Qitchen. Call 7215360 or 0917-8312238.

Mini muffin selection, P50, Apple's Kitchen. Call 7269820 or 7247868.

The ultimate Chocolate Chip Cookie, P270/box of nine, Zoe's Cookie Corner, 217 M. Paterno St., Francis Court Unit 16, San Juan. Call 7268382 or 0918-4278253. Cookies also available from Dessert Trolley, Qitchen, Kitchen Real.

Raise the bar

Brownies, P85/box of nine, Valerie's. Call 0918-6988376.

Caramel, Revel Bars, P100/box of 12, A&A, (046-5719874/0919-7231865). Brownies also available from Qitchen, Apple's Kitchen, Kitchen Real.

Lemon Squares, P220/box of 16; Date Walnut Bars, P340/box of 16, Zoe's Cookie Corner. Call 0918-4278253. Pick-up may be at Oz Café, UP Diliman.

Carrot Squares, P250/box of 16. Order from Qitchen. Call 0917-8312238 or 7215360.

All dressed up

Tasty and refreshing. Al Verde Poppy Seed dressing, P250/250 ml, Quick Gourmet Spanish Delicacies. Call 9267948. Pick-up may be at Oz Café, UP Diliman.

Mango Vinaigrette, P150; Honey Mustard Petite, P75, Apple's Kitchen. Call 0917-8436574.

All goodies come in pretty Christmas packaging, so that's one Christmas task less for you. Remember to order at least four days in advance, and inquire about pick-up points, delivery charges and probable discounts for bulk orders.

Have a happy Christmas!

E-mail the author at zeecastro@yahoo.com

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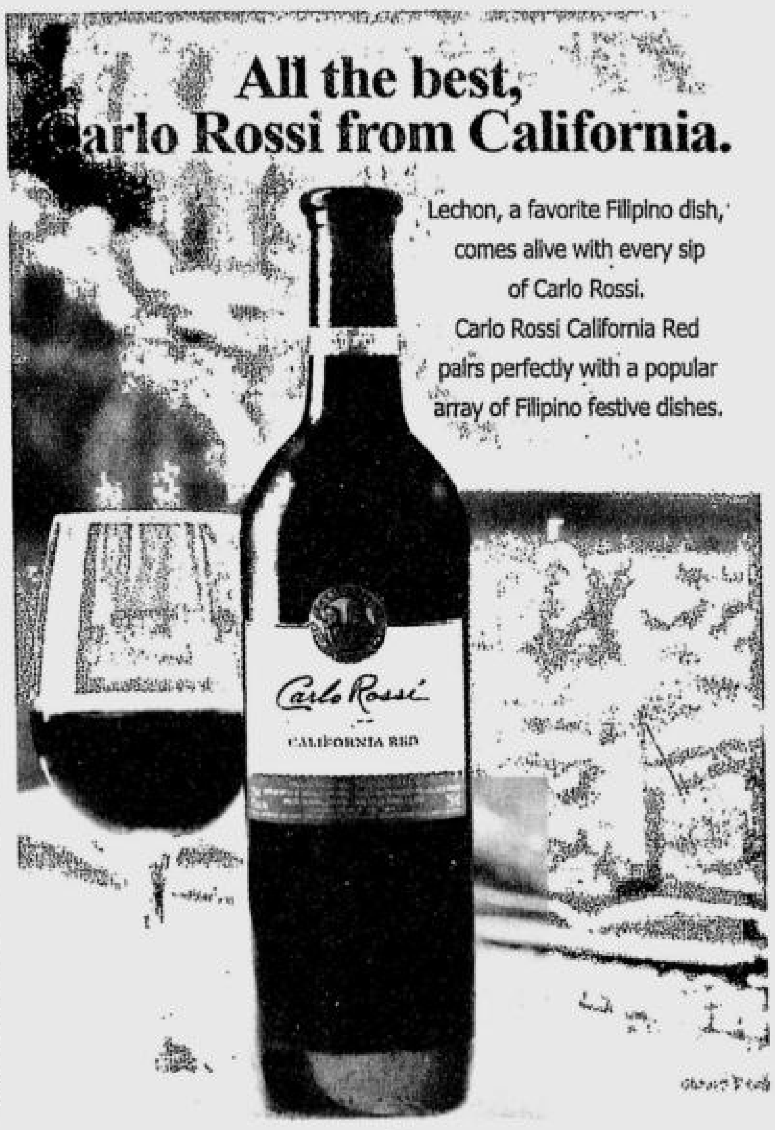
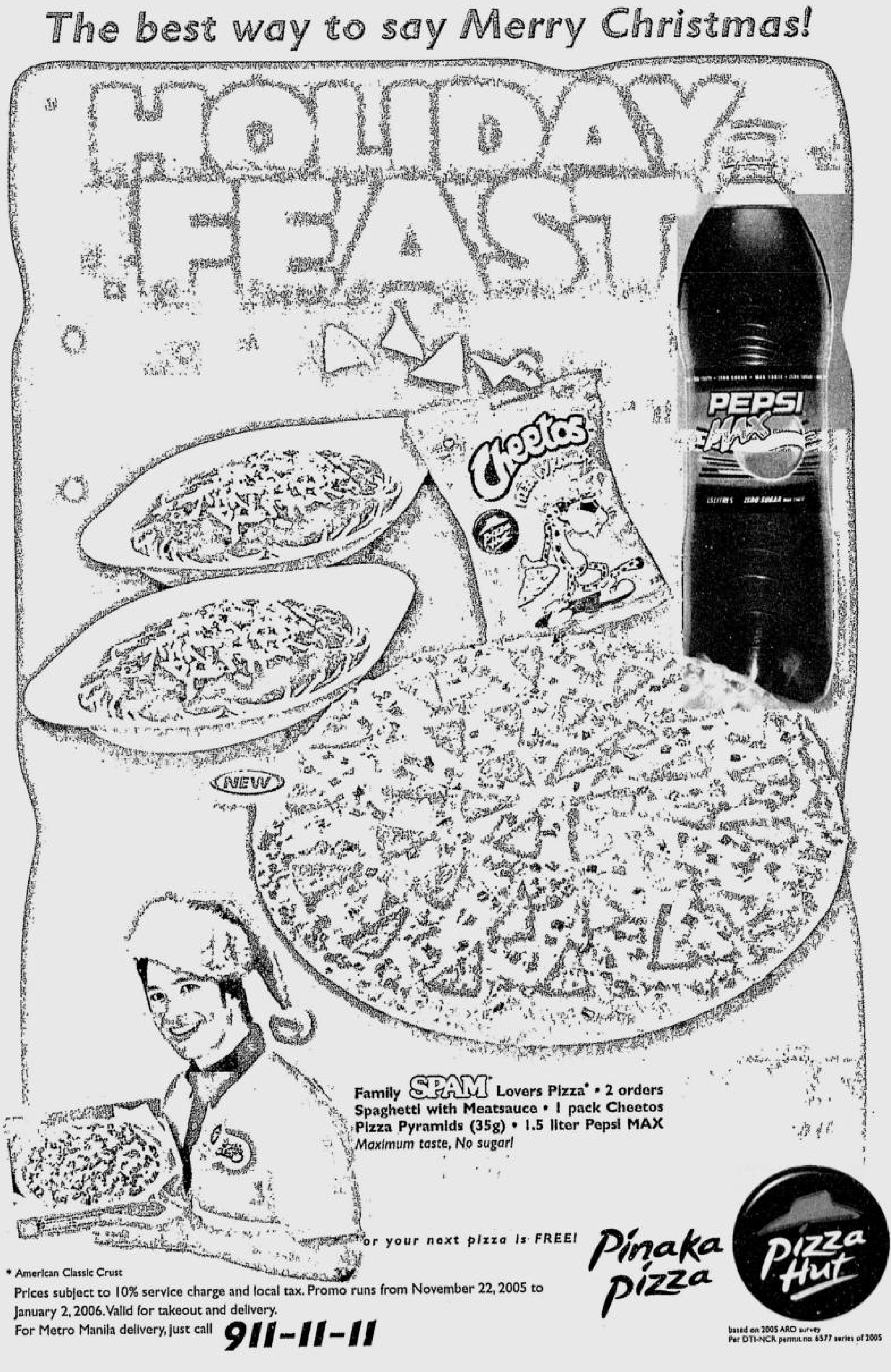


All the best,
Carlo Rossi from California.
Lechon, a favorite Filipino dish, comes alive with every sip of Carlo Rossi.
Carlo Rossi California Red pairs perfectly with a popular array of Filipino festive dishes.



The best way to say Merry Christmas!
HOLIDAY FEAST
NEW
Family SPAM Lovers Pizza* • 2 orders Spaghetti with Meatsauce • 1 pack Cheetos Pizza Pyramids (35g) • 1.5 liter Pepsi MAX
Maximum taste, No sugar!
or your next pizza is FREE!
Pinaka pizza
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* American Classic Crust
Prices subject to 10% service charge and local tax. Promo runs from November 22, 2005 to January 2, 2006. Valid for takeout and delivery.
For Metro Manila delivery, just call 911-11-11
based on 2005 ARO survey
Per DTI-NCR permit no. 6577 series of 2005

Celebrate Christmas at SM Supermalls

A star-studded December shopping experience awaits you and your family this holiday season!

From Las Vegas, master illusionists Jeff Simon and Tom Silver deliver an amazing combination of state-of-the-art original illusions, magic, comedy, dance and colorful costumes. A riveting one-hour experience for SM mall shoppers!

SCHEDULE OF SHOWS

Dec 16	SM City San Lazaro
Dec 17	SM Supercenter Valenzuela
Dec 19	SM Southmall
Dec 21	SM City Bicutan
Dec 23	SM Megamall

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SUPERMALLS
Complete your wish list with great gift choices at any of our 22 Supermalls
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Spectacular Fireworks!

SM Megamall	Dec 17, 23, 29
SM City North Edsa	Dec 17, 24, 31
SM City Fairview	Dec 17, 23, 30
SM City Sta. Mesa	Dec 30
SM Supercenter Valenzuela	Dec 30
SM City San Lazaro	Dec 30
SM City Bicutan	Dec 30
SM Southmall	Dec 23, 30
SM City Sucat	Dec 16, 23, 30
SM City Bacoor	Dec 17, 23, 30

Provincial Luzon and VisMin Malls Schedule

SM City Batangas	Dec 30
SM Supercenter Molino	Dec 17, 25, 30
SM City Pampanga	Dec 23, 30
SM City Marilao	Dec 17, 23, 29
SM City Baguio	Dec 17
SM City Lucena	Dec 17, 23, 30
SM City Cebu	Dec 17, 24, 31
SM City Iloilo	Dec 17, 24, 31

Christmas with the Stars

Catch the stars of the 2005 Metro Manila Film Festival at SM Supermalls!

Cast of Kutob Mall Tour

Dec 16	SM City Bacoor
Dec 18	SM City Manila

Cast of Enteng Kabisote Mall Tour

Dec 17
SM City North Edsa

Dec 18
SM City Bicutan

Cast of "Tales from the Enchanted Kingdom: Exodus"

Dec 23	SM City San Lazaro

Caroling Cheers

Guest choral groups and choirs will perform their repertoire of yuletide melodies in SM malls:

SM City North Edsa	Dec 18
SM Megamall	Dec 19
SM City Fairview	Dec 20, 21, 22
SM City Sta. Mesa	Dec 15, 21, 22
SM City Bicutan	Dec 15, 20, 21, 22
SM Southmall	Dec 15, 21
SM City Sucat	Dec 15 / Dec 19-23
SM City Bacoor	Dec 15, 19, 20, 21, 22

Provincial Luzon and VisMin Malls Schedule

SM City Dasmariñas	Dec 15, 20
SM City Batangas	Dec 15, 19-23
SM Supercenter Molino	Dec 19-22
SM City Marilao	Dec 15, 19-20
SM City Lucena	Dec 15-23
SM City Cebu	Dec 15, 19-22
SM City Davao	Dec 15, 19-22
SM City Iloilo	Dec 15, 19-22
SM City Cagayan de Oro	Dec 18, 19, 22, 23

REGENT Columbia's

OWWA Family Day

Provincial Luzon and VisMin Malls Schedule

SM City Dasmariñas	Dec 16
SM City Batangas	Dec 15-18
SM City Pampanga	Dec 16
SM City Marilao	Dec 26-30
SM City Baguio	Dec 17, 20-22
SM City Lucena	Dec 15-18
SM City Cebu	Dec 18
SM City Davao	Dec 18-25

Holiday Mall Hours

Dec 15-22	10am-10pm
Dec 16-17	10am-12MIDNIGHT
Dec 23	10am-12MIDNIGHT
Dec 24	9am-7pm
Dec 25	10am-10pm
Dec 26-28	10am-10pm
Dec 29	10am-12MIDNIGHT*
Dec 29	10am-10pm (Provincial Malls only)
Dec 30	10am-10pm
Dec 31	9am-7pm
Jan 01, 2006	12nn-10pm

*Only in Metro Manila malls

LIPA'S must 'goto'
/F3

LIFESTYLE

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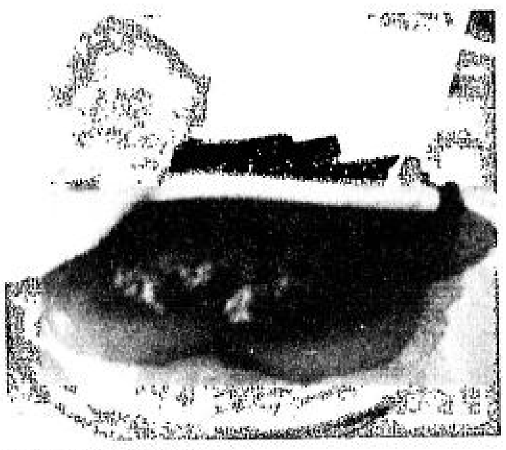


PUSO-SAPAL Burger

Healthy vegetarian burger

By Alfie Cris Imbang

HEALTH CONSCIOUS? WELL, I COME from a family that values well-balanced and nutritious meals.

A fourth generation member of the family, I was trained since childhood always to have vegetables in my diet.

My 79-year-old grandma is a vegetarian at heart and I really admire her as she can prepare different vegetables into mouth-watering dishes that we, her *apos*, find irresistible.

Eye-catching advertisements on television or bill boards may have made hamburger quite popular. But, given the need to tighten our belts, people who can no longer afford the costly hamburger from fast-food joints may want to try my *lola*'s specialty—the Puso-Sapal Burger.

PDI FAMILY RECIPES CONTEST

My grandmother tells me her mother used *puso ng saging* as a substitute for meat. Later, *lola* made her own improvements, adding coco meat residue from coco jam-making. The concoction were made into patties as sandwich filling.

Kids in the family love to eat hamburger so my mom always has a stock of Puso-Sapal Burger patties. The patty is very easy to prepare and a tasty filling for *merienda*, *baon* or party treats.

Puso-Sapal patties may be kept for two weeks in the freezer.

Puso-Sapal Burger

1 c coconut *sapal* (grated coconut meat after milk extraction)
1 c *puso ng saging* (boiled, chopped thinly)
½ c flour
1 tbsp corn starch
½ c minced onion
2 eggs
1 tsp pepper
1 tsp salt
1 tbsp soy sauce
Oil for frying
Optional (for garnish):
Tomatoes
Cucumber
Cheese
Mayonnaise
Catsup

Steam coconut *sapal* for 10-15 minutes. Slice *puso ng saging* thinly or into strips. Add salt. Knead and squeeze to remove extra water.

Boil 1 c of water and cook *puso ng saging* until tender. Remove from heat, let cool. Squeeze/drain extra water.

In a bowl, combine all ingredients except optional items. Form into patties and fry to desired doneness.

Serve on buns. Garnish with fresh sliced tomatoes, cucumber, cheese, mayonnaise and catsup.

Win SM Supermarket gift checks

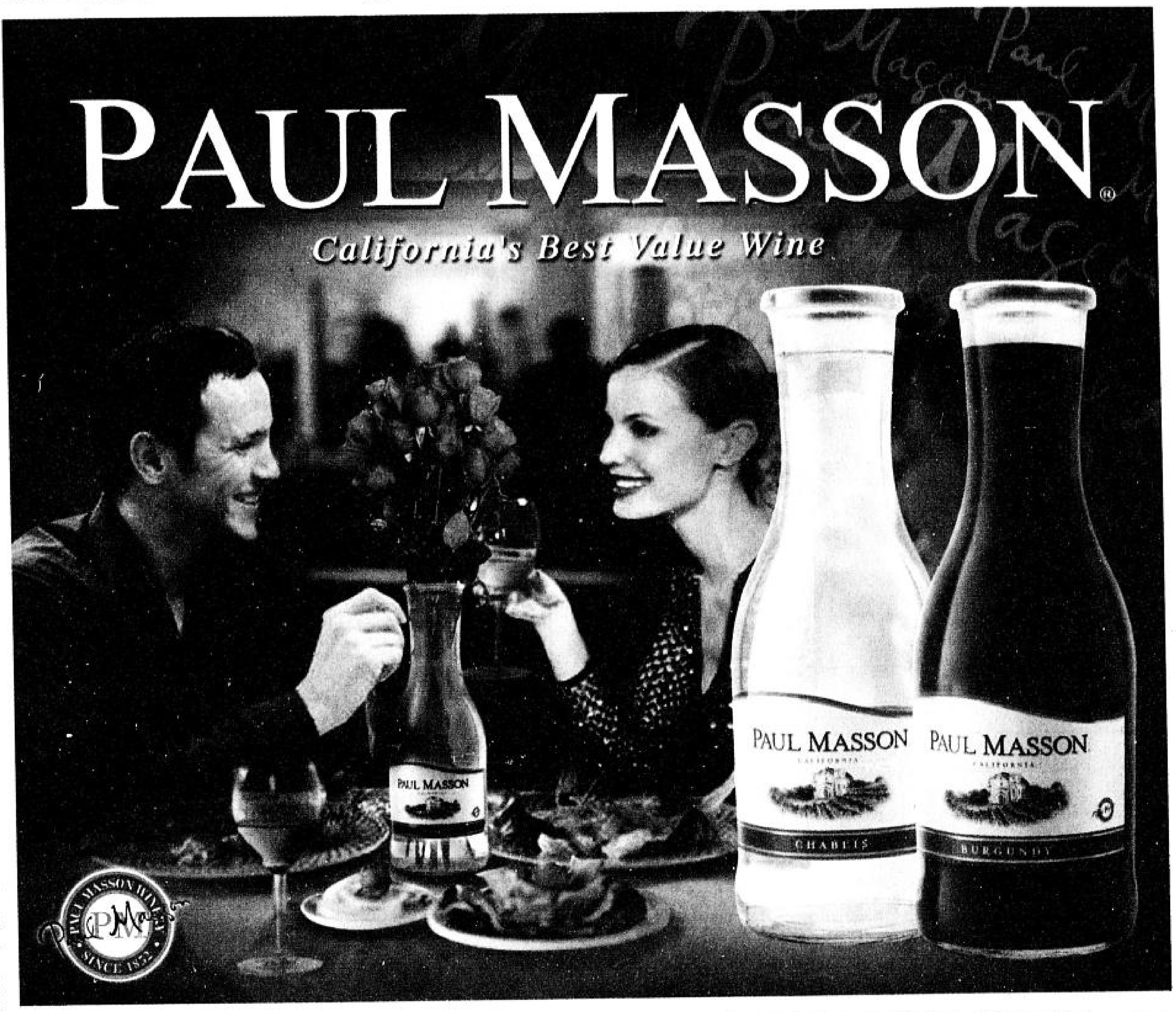
LIFESTYLE IS LOOKING FOR RECIPES that use traditional Filipino techniques and ingredients.

Send us your family recipes and, if your entry is chosen, you can win P2,000 worth of SM Supermarket gift checks, an Imarflex gift or a class at the Reggie Aspiras School of Culinary Arts.

Tell us who in your family first cooked the recipe; how many generations have cooked it; when it is usually cooked and served. Write your name, address, phone numbers and e-mail address, if any, at the bottom of the recipe.

Include a **photo of the dish.** Please do not send us your photo.

Mail or deliver your entry to PDI Family Recipes Contest, c/o Lifestyle, Philippine Daily Inquirer, 1098 Chino Roces Ave., Makati City 1263. Or e-mail to **recipes@inquirer.com.ph.** For details, e-mail lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph. Winners may claim prizes from the PDI marketing office.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SKIN CENTER HOTLINES: ALABANG 7750587/09183912510 BINONDO 2420728/09178224399 CALOOCAN 3657653 GREENHILLS 7261526/09194986196 MALATE 5259891/09213173415 MEGAMALL 6377543/09162479753 PASAY RD. 8873530/09156893088 PASIG 6473814/09275341314

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

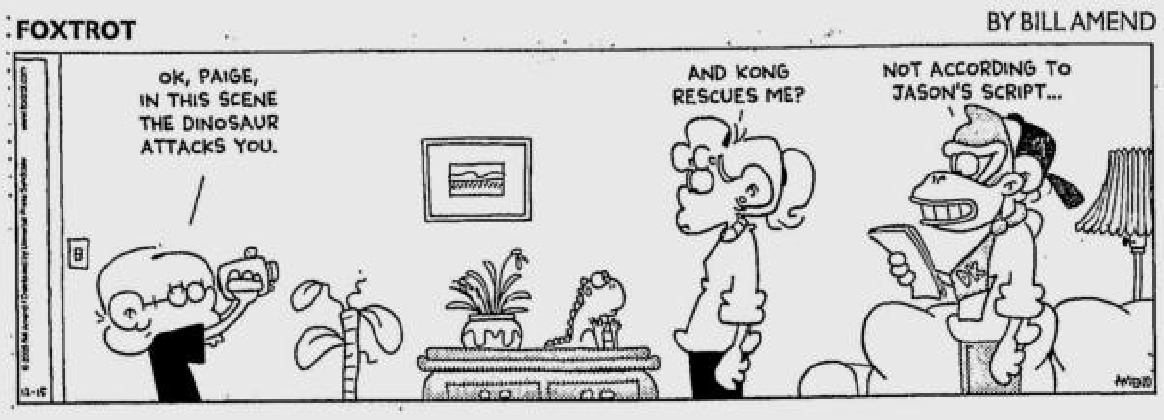
ComicRelief

e-mail feedback at arts@inquirer.com.ph

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2005

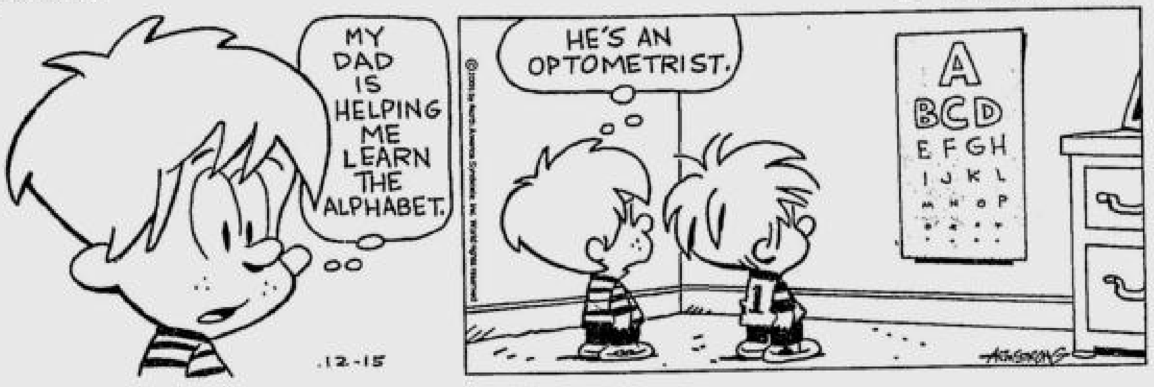
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


OK, PAIGE, IN THIS SCENE THE DINOSAUR ATTACKS YOU.
AND KONG RESCUES ME?
NOT ACCORDING TO JASON'S SCRIPT...
12-15
AMEND

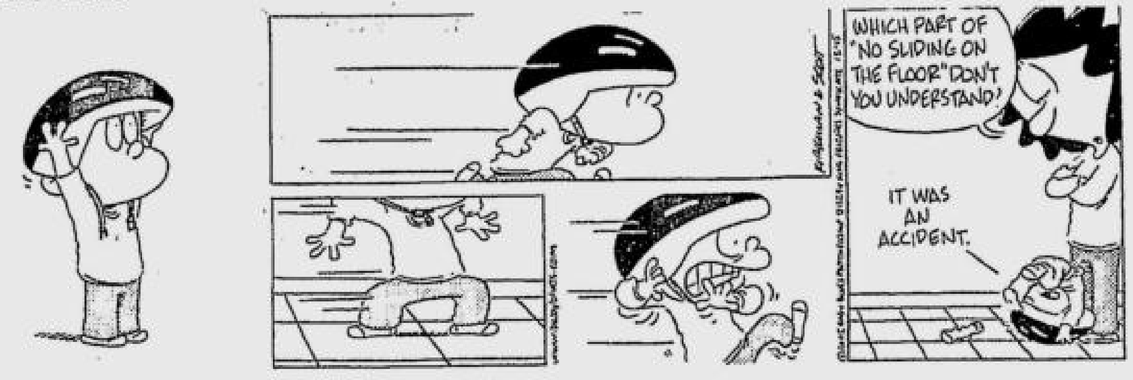
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


MY DAD IS HELPING ME LEARN THE ALPHABET.
HE'S AN OPTOMETRIST.
A
BCD
EFGH
IJKL
MNOP
12-15
ARMSTRONG

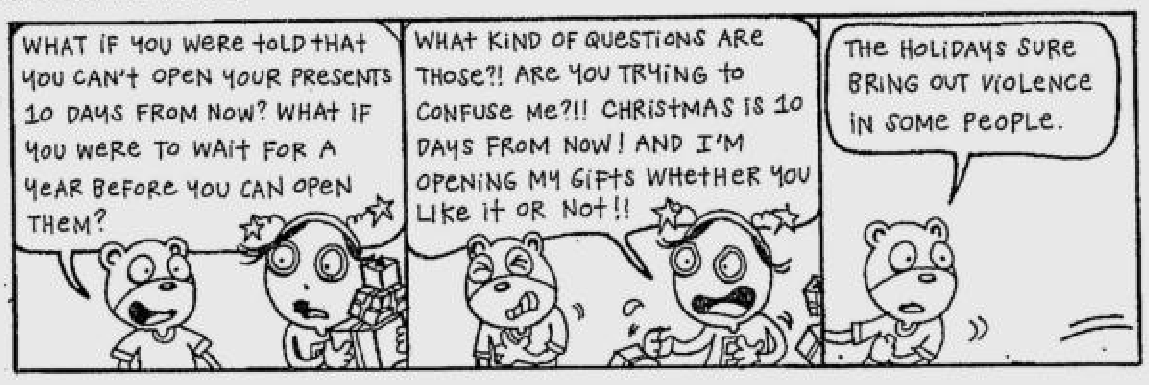
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


WHICH PART OF "NO SLIDING ON THE FLOOR" DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND?
IT WAS AN ACCIDENT.
KIRKMAN & SCOTT

ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


WHAT IF YOU WERE TOLD THAT YOU CAN'T OPEN YOUR PRESENTS 10 DAYS FROM NOW? WHAT IF YOU WERE TO WAIT FOR A YEAR BEFORE YOU CAN OPEN THEM?
WHAT KIND OF QUESTIONS ARE THOSE?! ARE YOU TRYING TO CONFUSE ME?!! CHRISTMAS IS 10 DAYS FROM NOW! AND I'M OPENING MY GIFTS WHETHER YOU LIKE IT OR NOT!!
THE HOLIDAYS SURE BRING OUT VIOLENCE IN SOME PEOPLE.

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're friendly, easygoing and cheerful. People like your lighthearted approach to things. In turn, your optimism gives you the courage to tackle big projects. You believe in your own good luck. And you should. This optimism is the key to your success. Now hear this: The year ahead might be the best year of your life! Go get 'em, Tiger.

Birthdate of: Adam Brody, actor; Helen Slater, actress; Betty Smith, writer.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Get down off your soapbox and stop preaching to everyone. For starters, can you walk your talk? Each person must follow his or her own personal path to the Truth.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): You're determined to get your way in matters regarding shared property. You want to know everything about your partner's income now. (You know where the bodies are buried.)

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Be gentle with others. Either you're trying to make over somebody or somebody is trying to do this to you. Either way, it's meddling. Nobody likes this.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): You're singing a whole new tune. You want to turn over a new leaf. You want to improve your health, and you also want to improve your approach to your work.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Don't be heavy and critical with children today. That might be a knee-jerk reaction. However, remember the advice of Goethe: "Criticism does much, but encouragement does more."

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): You want to make improvements and reforms at home. You want to clean up the place and get rid of stuff you don't need. This is good! But avoid power struggles with others.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): You're obsessed with a particular idea today. You think it's the best thing since sliced bread and canned beer. That's OK; however, quit trying to persuade everyone else to agree with you.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Your urge to buy something today is almost compulsive. This is not the ideal frame of mind to take shopping. Cool your heels. Don't act today.

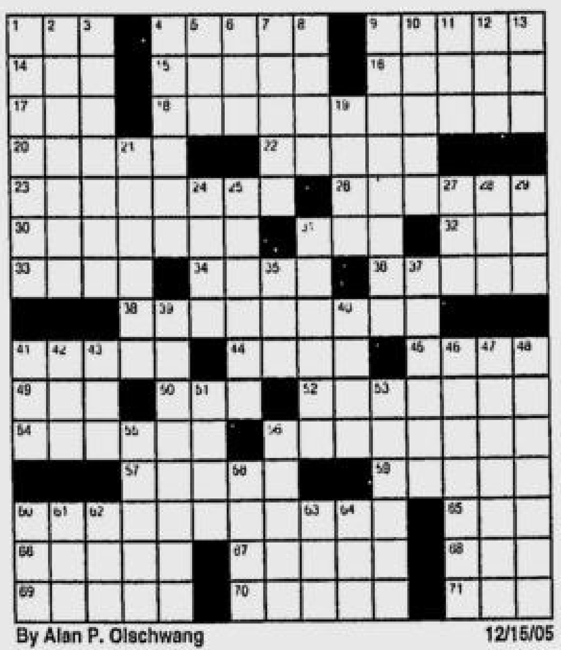
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): You're determined to do a makeover on yourself. You want to buff that bod! You want to look better and feel better.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Don't listen to any thoughts of self-criticism that you have today. This is just your perfectionist nature doing a boomerang on you. Just love yourself. (Nobody's perfect.)

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): You're really gung-ho about something today. You want to persuade friends and groups to go along with your thinking. Don't try to change others. You can only change yourself.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Avoid power struggles and arguments with parents, bosses and VIPs today. You can't win. You will only stir up greater opposition to your ideas.

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Alan P. Olschwang
Huntington Beach, CA

12/15/05

ACROSS

1 Loony
4 Volcanic flows
9 Made longer ago
14 GPs' org.
15 Mennonite sect
16 Range rope
17 Negative vote
18 Start of Shakespeare quote
20 __ of roses
22 Pithy saying
23 Part 2 of quote
26 Prickling sensation
30 Tubb and Truex
31 Franklin or Kingsley
32 Lincoln or Burrows
33 Scandinavian rugs
34 Feudal serf
36 Singer Neville
38 Part 3 of quote
41 Boutonniere's place
44 Calendar confines
45 Blue in Berlin
49 Mine find
50 Dog tags, briefly
52 Army chow
54 Scale range
56 Part 4 of quote
57 Roman guardian spirits
59 Like a couch potato
60 End of quote
65 Peggy or Pinky
66 Co-inventor of Trivial Pursuit
67 Bridge pioneer Charles
68 Sheepish she
69 Shoulder warmer
70 Tennis scores after deuce
71 Small pc. of land

DOWN

1 Supervisor
2 Of love
3 __ Beach, FL
4 Scottish landowners
5 Check fig.
6 Seven on a sundial
7 Syrian leader
8 Roe source
9 First
10 Type of closet
11 Family member
12 WWII arena
13 Brit. flyboys
19 Singer Smith
21 "__ Fideles"
24 Somme summers
25 Bacon works
27 Long-snouted fish
28 Wall St. maneuver
29 Poetic contraction
31 Watch out!
35 TV's "Science Guy" Bill
37 England, in poems
39 Popeye's love
40 QED part
41 Soho restroom
42 Circle part
43 Touch tenderly
46 Rhine siren
47 Actress Julie
48 J. P. Morgan company
51 Fender flaw
53 Ironic endings
55 Nixon's veep
56 Give way
58 Conception
60 Satisfied sighs
61 College cheer
62 Alfonso's queen
63 Actor Wallach
64 Lair

Wednesday's Puzzle Solved

A	L	P	S	■	T	W	A	S	■	B	I	N	G	S
H	O	O	P	■	R	O	O	T	■	O	C	A	L	A
E	D	N	A	■	A	N	N	A	■	X	E	N	O	N
M	I	D	W	E	S	T	E	R	N	S	T	A	T	E
■	■	■	N	T	H	■	■	R	O	C	■	■	■	■
S	H	E	■	A	C	T	S	■	M	O	R	A	L	E
A	I	R	S	■	A	R	I	A	■	R	U	B	E	N
C	R	I	M	I	N	A	L	S	M	E	T	H	O	D
R	E	C	U	R	■	P	L	E	A	■	H	O	N	E
O	R	A	T	O	H	■	Y	A	R	D	■	R	E	D
■	■	■	■	N	E	C	■	■	V	O	W	■	■	■
P	O	S	T	O	F	F	I	C	E	C	H	E	C	K
L	O	N	E	R	■	U	C	A	L	■	O	K	R	A
O	Z	O	N	E	■	S	E	R	A	■	L	E	A	N
D	E	B	T	S	■	E	R	S	T	■	E	D	G	E

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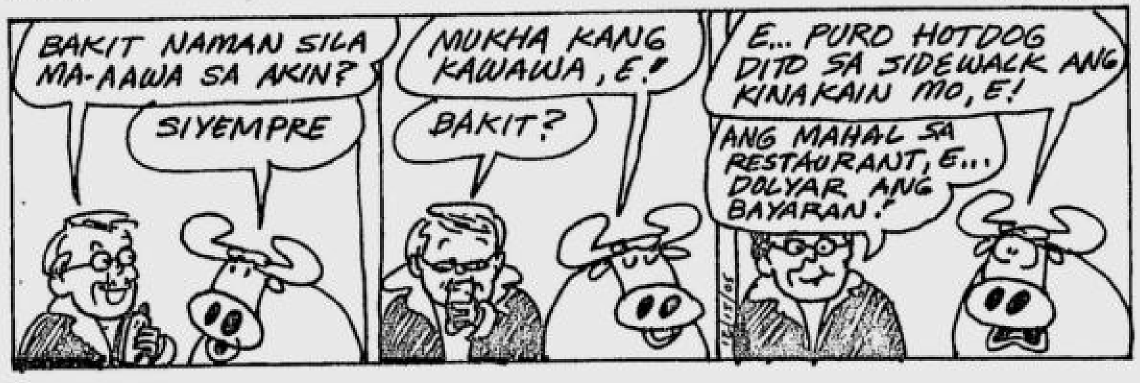
12/15/05

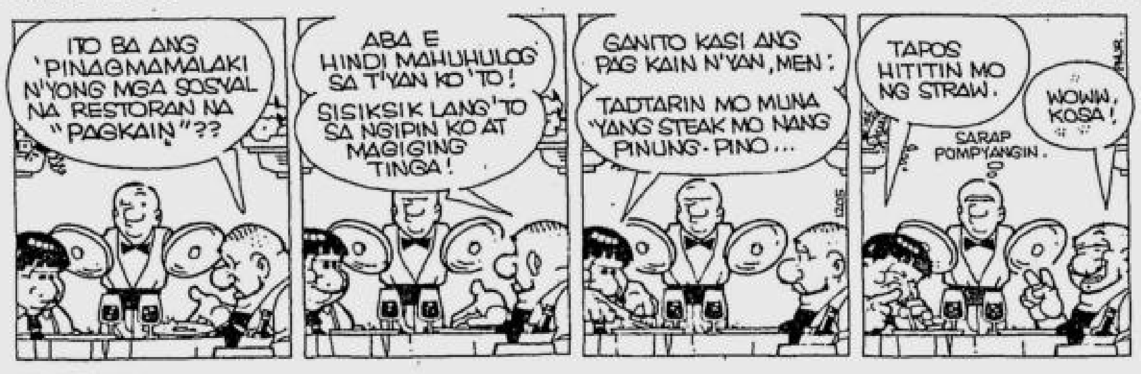
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


BAKIT NAMAN SILA MA-AAWA SA AKIN?
SIYEMPRE
MUKHA KANG KAWAWA, E!
BAKIT?
E... PURO HOTDOG DITO SA SIDEWALK ANG KINAKAIN MO, E!
ANG MAHAL SA RESTAURANT, E... DOLYAR ANG BAYARAN!
12/15/05

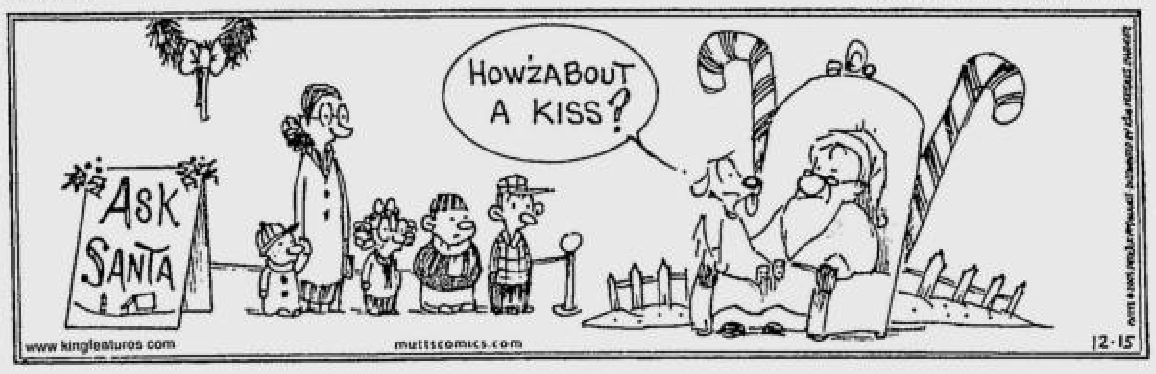
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


ITO BA ANG 'PINAGMAMALAKI N'YONG MGA SOSYAL NA RESTORAN NA "PAGKAIN"??
ABA E HINDI MAHUHULOG SA T'YAN KO 'TO!
SISIKSIK LANG 'TO SA NGIPIN KO AT MAGIGING TINGA!
GANITO KASI ANG PAG KAIN N'YAN, MEN:
TADTARIN MO MUNA 'YANG STEAK MO NANG PINUNG-PINO...
TAPOS HITITIN MO NG STRAW.
WOWW, KOSA!
SARAP POMPYANGIN.

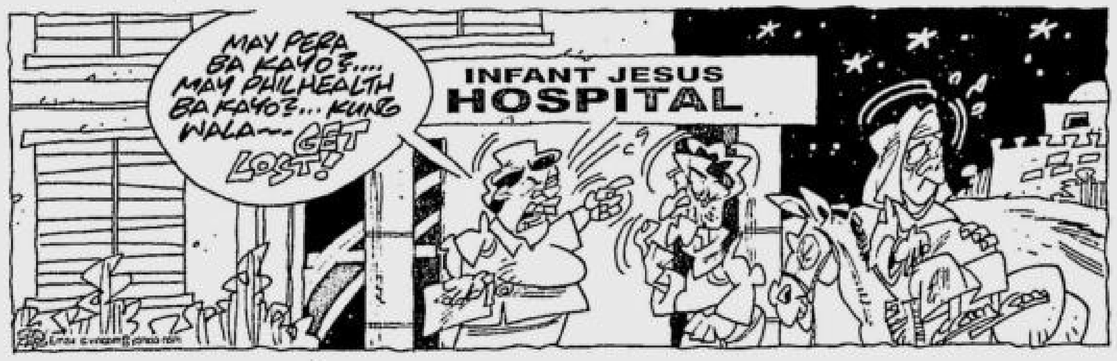
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


ASK SANTA
HOW'ZABOUT A KISS?
www.kingfeatures.com
muttscomics.com
12-15

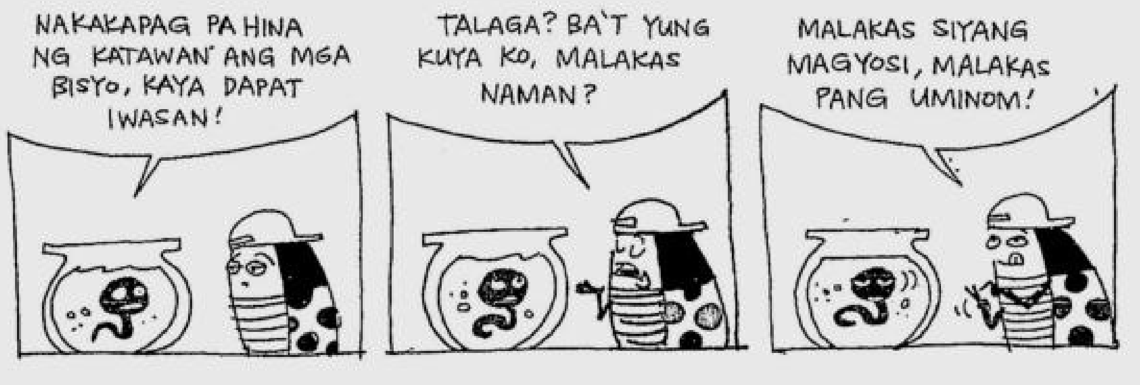
DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


MAY PERA BA KAYO?.... MAY PHILHEALTH BA KAYO?... KUNG WALA~ GET LOST!
INFANT JESUS HOSPITAL

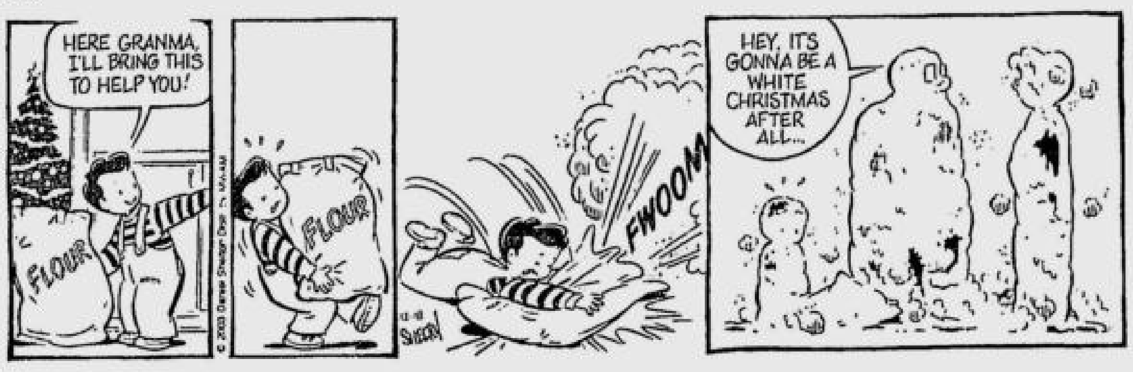
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


NAKAKAPAG PA HINA NG KATAWAN ANG MGA BISYO, KAYA DAPAT IWASAN!
TALAGA? BA'T YUNG KUYA KO, MALAKAS NAMAN?
MALAKAS SIYANG MAGYOSI, MALAKAS PANG UMINOM!

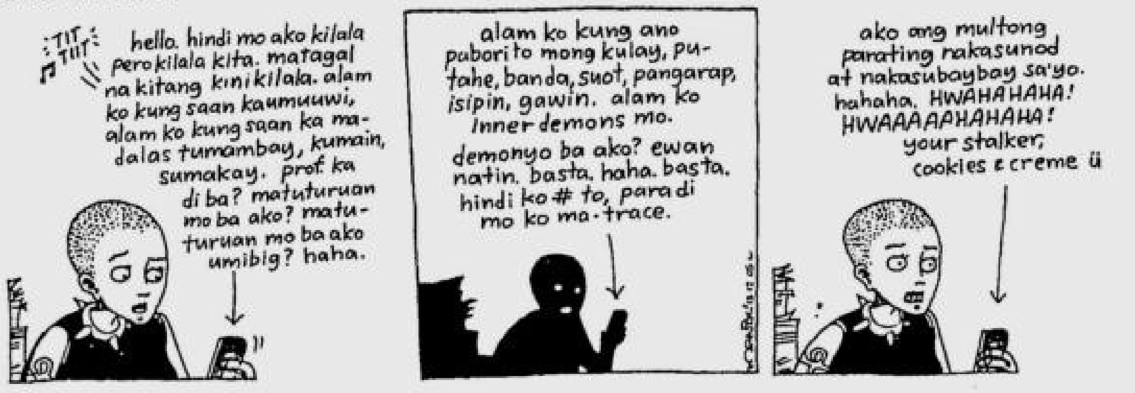
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


HERE GRANMA, I'LL BRING THIS TO HELP YOU!
FLOUR
FLOUR
FWOOM
HEY, ITS GONNA BE A WHITE CHRISTMAS AFTER ALL...
SHELTON

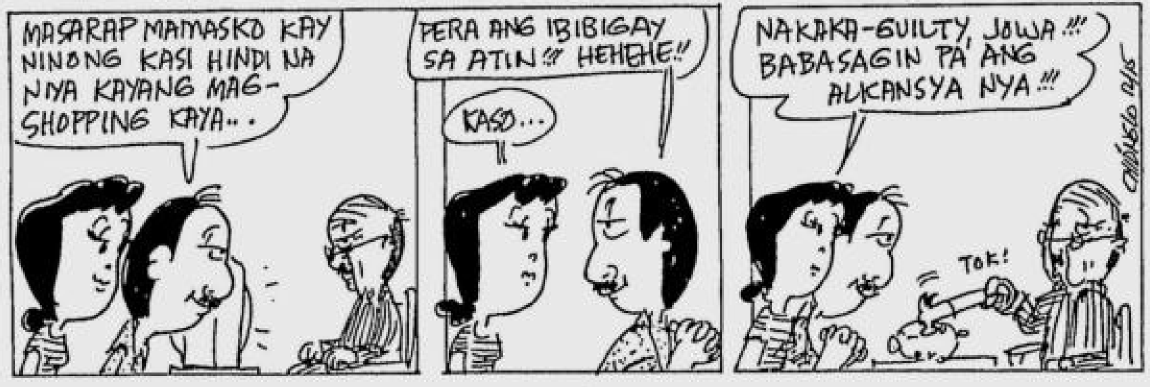
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


TIIT TIIT
hello. hindi mo ako kilala pero kilala kita. matagal na kitang kinikilala. alam ko kung saan kaumuuwi, alam ko kung saan ka madalas tumambay, kumain, sumakay. prof ka di ba? matuturuan mo ba ako? matuturuan mo ba ako umibig? haha.
alam ko kung ano paborito mong kulay, putahe, banda, suot, pangarap, isipin, gawin. alam ko inner demons mo. demonyo ba ako? ewan natin. basta. haha. basta. hindi ko # to, para di mo ko ma-trace.
ako ang multong parating nakasunod at nakasubaybay sa'yo. hahaha. HWAHAHAHA! HWAAAAAHAHAHA! your stalker, cookies & creme ü

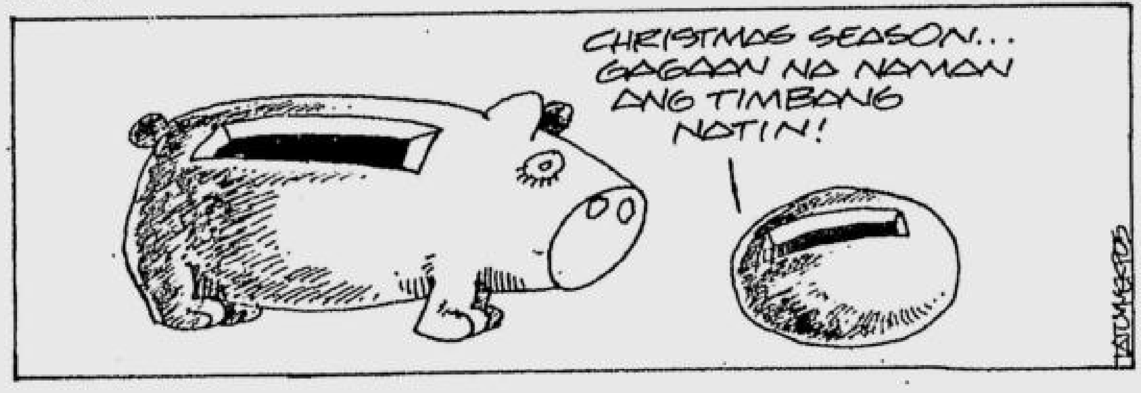
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


MASARAP MAMASKO KAY NINONG KASI HINDI NA NIYA KAYANG MAG-SHOPPING KAYA...
PERA ANG IBIBIGAY SA ATIN!!! HEHEHE!!
KASO...
NAKAKA-GUILTY, JOWA!!! BABASAGIN PA ANG ALKANSYA NYA!!!
TOK!
CHIONGLO 12/15

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


CHRISTMAS SEASON... GAGAAN NA NAMAN ANG TIMBANG NATIN!
TATUM

Don't be too quick to buy that laser gizmo

THE CONSUMER
Marietta Velasco Giron

The USFDA warns the light can be more damaging than staring directly into the sun

IT'S HORRIFYING TO SEE A lot of toys with laser lights in the market. Kids love to play with them. They and their parents do not seem to realize that laser light can cause serious eye damage.

Just a few months ago, the United States Food and Drug Administration issued a warning to the public that laser pointers—the thin flashlight used by lecturers to draw attention to items projected on a screen—were being used indiscriminately as novelty toys. The agency was alarmed by the increasing promotion and sale of laser products on the Internet.

In its warning, the FDA pointed out that light from a laser pointer, when aimed straight at the eyes, could be more damaging than staring directly into the sun. The agency also expressed apprehension about the health threats of overpowered lasers that might emit more radiation than allowed safe levels.

Parents were strongly advised not to buy laser pointers for their children. The agency further cautioned that users should never aim or shine a laser pointer at anyone.

It is high time that our health department, as well as the trade and industry department, ban these toys and wage an information campaign on laser light hazards.

Condo trouble

When Joseph Ubaldo, an author we know, decided to invest in a condominium unit, he didn't expect that one day he would come to regret it.

He told us of problems that had been causing him sleepless nights lately. Ubaldo wrote:

"Efforts to straighten out some administrative problems I am having with the condominium manager have failed. The manager did not turn up at the meeting where I had expected to clear up questions about bill payments, payment through the bank, oppressive four percent cumulative interest, and a recent mishap in the kitchen.

"Last November, a leak in the hose attached to a water heater in the kitchen of my condo unit caused flooding and the water flowed to units on the lower level of the building... the manager... has not lifted a finger to act on my complaint."

Ubaldo, by the way, is chair of the International Association of Educators for World Peace. His latest book, "Wounded No More," is available at PowerBooks. It is an interesting study on Lyentology, which means "pathology of lies."

SM responds

We appreciate the response of Shoemart customer service to the complaint of a reader about the promo raffle at SM-Cubao called Shop-To-Win One of five Toyota Innova cars.

The reader said there was no banner or poster at SM to announce the winners at the end of the promo. Though the car prizes were gone, she added, she didn't see any list of winners displayed anywhere at the mall premises.

In response to the complaint, SM sent us the list of winners:

Winner of first draw held Sept. 9—Villaflor A. Lagundi (we are withholding address and stub numbers); Metro Manila winner of second draw held Oct. 8—Keithel T. Salcedo; Luzon winner—Luisito Bumatay; Visayas winner—Jovy Mationg Calizo; and Mindanao winne—Estrelita Sambaon.

Millie Dizon of SM corporate communications office explained: "We would like to assure your reader that all our raffle promotions are closely coordinated with the Department of Trade and Industry, from whom we seek the permits, and who sends representatives in all our raffle draws.

"We apologize though if the information was not available during the time of (the customer's) visit. We have called the attention of our staff that they should be able to answer or refer customers properly."

Good guys

We thank Pinky Torres of Globe customer service for responding to the complaints we forwarded to her.

From Carla Zabala: "Thank you to Abenson for replacing the airconditioning unit I complained about. Special thanks to Abenson's retail associate Rico Mesa."

We likewise appreciate the prompt response of Elizabeth G. de la Cruz at Meralco's Payment Process Staff to the complaint of Vangie Baga-Reyes.

Also to be commended is the helpful and courteous staff of Jill at Rustan's Department Store in Makati City. They willingly replaced a defective bag that was returned after almost two weeks because the customer went out of the country after purchase.

Thanks, too, to Jess Matubis of Maynilad Water Services for attending to a problem mentioned here in a previous column.

E-mail the author at mvgiron07@yahoo.com

Hassle-free party hosting

BUBBA GUMP IS OFFERING A party package consisting of its popular dishes.

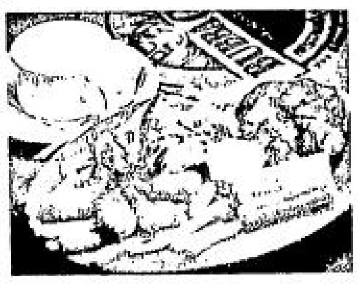
You can have Dixie Style Baby Back Ribs, Flat Iron Steak, Bourbon Street Mahi Mahi, Captain's Fish and Chips, or Mama Blue's Southern Charmed Fried Shrimp and Grilled Skewered Shrimp served with a choice of appetizers like the Old-Fashioned New England Clam Chowder or Classic Caesar Salad, and sidings like mashed potato, corn, and fries.

The package that also includes bottomless iced tea is available for P439-P635.

Brunch or *merienda* packages, at P330-P425, are also available.

If you are planning a Christmas party, let the Bubba Gump team help you.

Call 7575154.



MAMA'S Steak and Fried Shrimp

Bubba Gump party packages

For P465:
Bourbon Street Platter
Old-fashioned New England Clam Chowder
Bourbon Street Mahi Mahi and Shrimp over Mashed Potatoes
Dixie Style Baby Back Ribs
Ping Pong Shrimp
Corn
Iced tea

For P439:
Captain's Fish & Ribs
Classic Caesar Salad
Captain's Fish and Chips
Dixie Style Baby Back Ribs
Ping Pong Shrimp
Cole Slaw
Corn
Iced tea

For P635:
Mama's Steak & Fried Shrimp
Old-fashioned New England Clam Chowder
Mama Blue's Southern Charmed Fried Shrimp
Cole Slaw
Fries
Corn
Iced tea

For P425:
Jenny's Shrimp New Orleans
Old-fashioned New England Clam Chowder
Classic Caesar Salad
Shrimp New Orleans
Iced tea

A hassle-and-worry-free Noche Buena and Media Noche

LUCKY 21 FOOD PRODUCTS

It's Christmas season once again!

Time for gift giving, and of course, party giving. And to give you a hassle-free & worry-free Christmas Party, Lucky 21 Food Products is offering treats that your officemates, neighbors, & most especially, your loved ones, will surely enjoy.

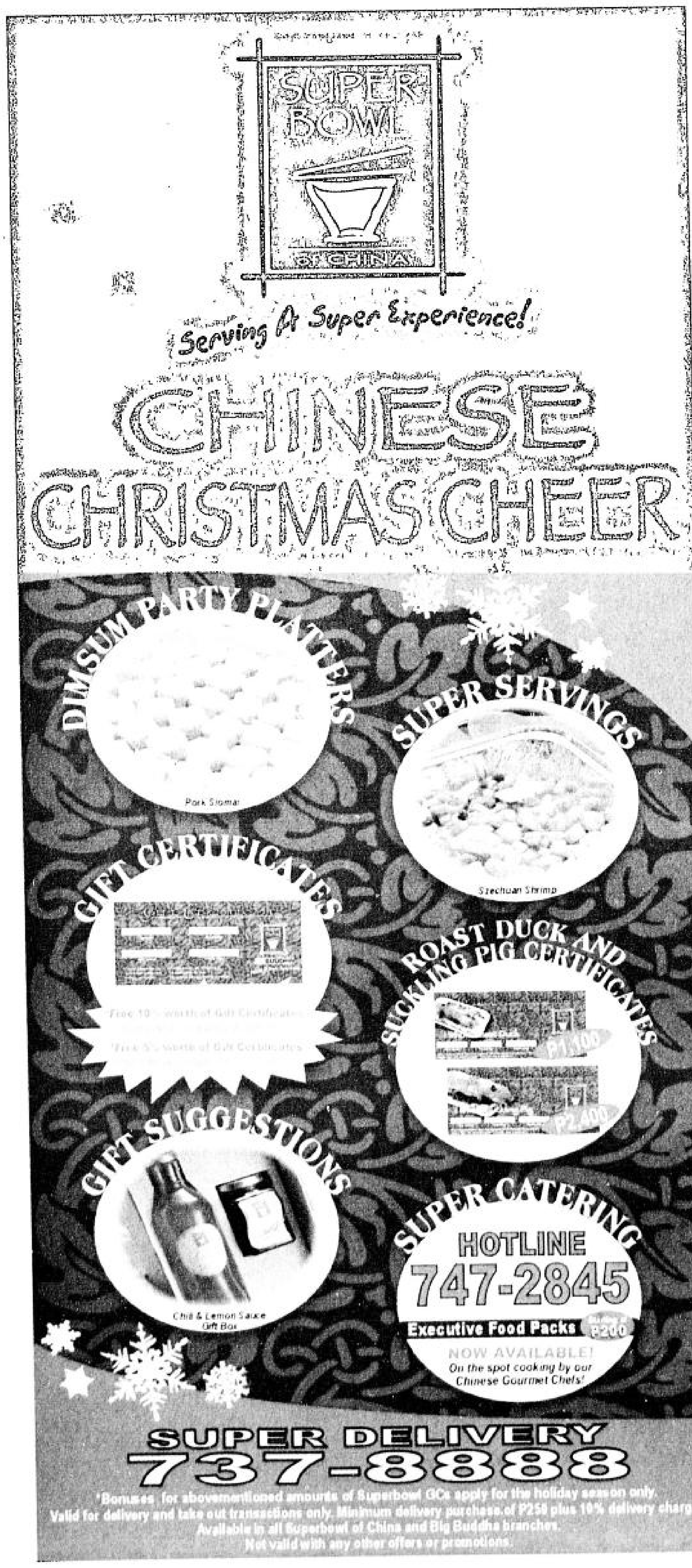
As Christmas is a tradition, partake of our traditonal bestsellers: our bite-size *Empanaditas*: tasty & crunchy! And our multi-flavored *Special Empanadas* that come in various flavors of Chicken, Tuna, Spicy Beef, Ham & Cheese, Pork Adobo, Asado, Menudo, Chorizo & Chicken Pastel.

And to fill up those appetites, we also offer *Pancit Malabon & Sotanghon.* The best sauce in town to complement our *Fresh Lumpiang Ubod, Embotido & Siomai.* Remember to ask for our **FREE** *Atchara.*

For dessert & light snacks, bring home these mouth-watering delicacies: *Leche Flan, Halayang Ube, Brownies, Carrot Cupcake, Puto, Macaroons, Food for the Gods, and Fruit Cake Squares.* Mmm (Just don't forget to brush your teeth.)

So, this Christmas, give more time to your loved ones. Give Love! Don't cook! Let us do it for you.

Call us: 922-9605; 926-0142 & 410-7987. Or simply drop by our place at 21 K-3rd St, Kamuning, Q.C.



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A memorable feast

DECEMBER, IT IS said, is the "marry-est" month. And it's proving to be true, at least by the number of invitations from nieces and friends who will marry this Christmas season.

The receptions will mostly be held in hotel ballrooms the food almost predictable by now. That is why a niece's wedding feast a year ago has proven to be so memorable.

We, her aunts, uncles and cousins, traveled to Tayug in Pangasinan following her map from the Carmen Rosales town entry point. Most maps don't give you a sense of distance so you feel you're on an endless road to nowhere. At last the town name appeared after expecting to see it for an hour.

We arrived on the eve of the wedding and my niece said there was to be a get-together that night. She told us we had to walk a long way from the street corner. We decoded that to mean the aunts were not supposed to wear heels. Another turn into a small pathway and the party area was easy to discern.

On a clearing in the back that was not a yard but a whole field, there was an improvised hut without walls. Coconut leaves served as roof and all along the sides were Monobloc chairs arranged as if for a town dance.

'Bahay-bahay'

On one side was a piece of cloth with cutout letters which spelled the names of my niece and her intended. According to Gilda Cordero Fernando, in her book "Philippine Food and Life" (Anvil Publishing, 1992), the enclosed area was called *bahay-bahay* in Pangasinan. It's also known as *dramara* in Bulacan and *endramada* in Laguna.

COUNTRY COOKING

Micky Fenix

The whole barangay seemed to be there and we were to learn later that a wedding was a community affair.

At the reception the next day, it was the barangay captain who enjoined everyone to contribute money to the bride and groom to make the beginning of their life together a financially auspicious one and, at the same time, help pay for the sound system. He was also the auditor, announcing how much in paper bills was pinned on the bride and groom as they danced.

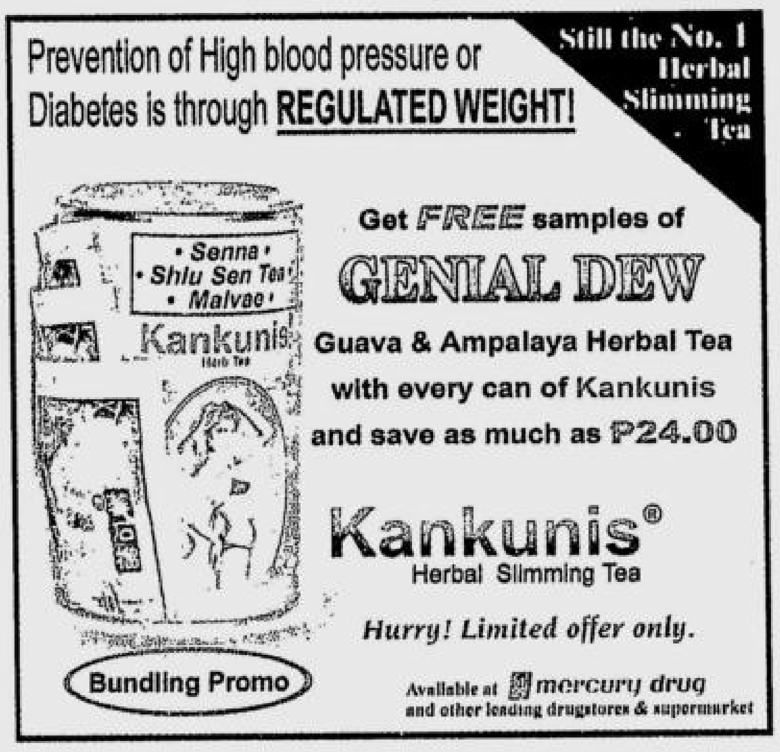
On the eve of the wedding, the family from Manila were the only guests invited to eat at the only long table inside the *bahay-bahay*. When we asked the groom's parents where the other guests ate, they pointed to some tables nearer the house where vats of food were cooking.

Do-do-do menu

The vats produced a series of dishes, mostly what one could get from a whole pig. Pieces were sliced thinly or in cubes, each tasting so differently. Some of them were what Fernando's essay described as the "do-do-do"

A MEMORABLE/ F4

> My son must have wondered how the town cooks could estimate just how much salt, tomato sauce, soy sauce, pepper or vinegar to put into the huge vat



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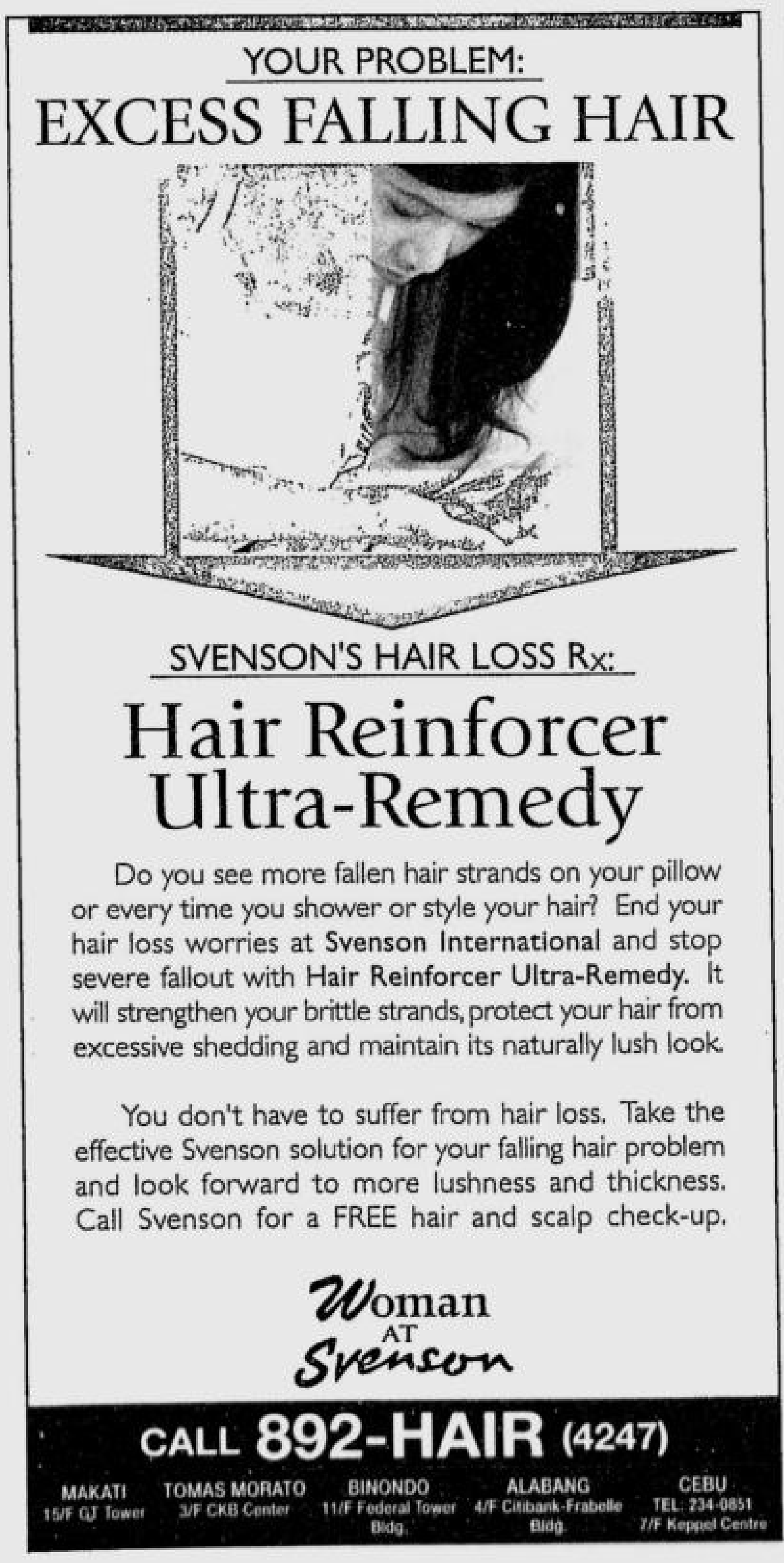

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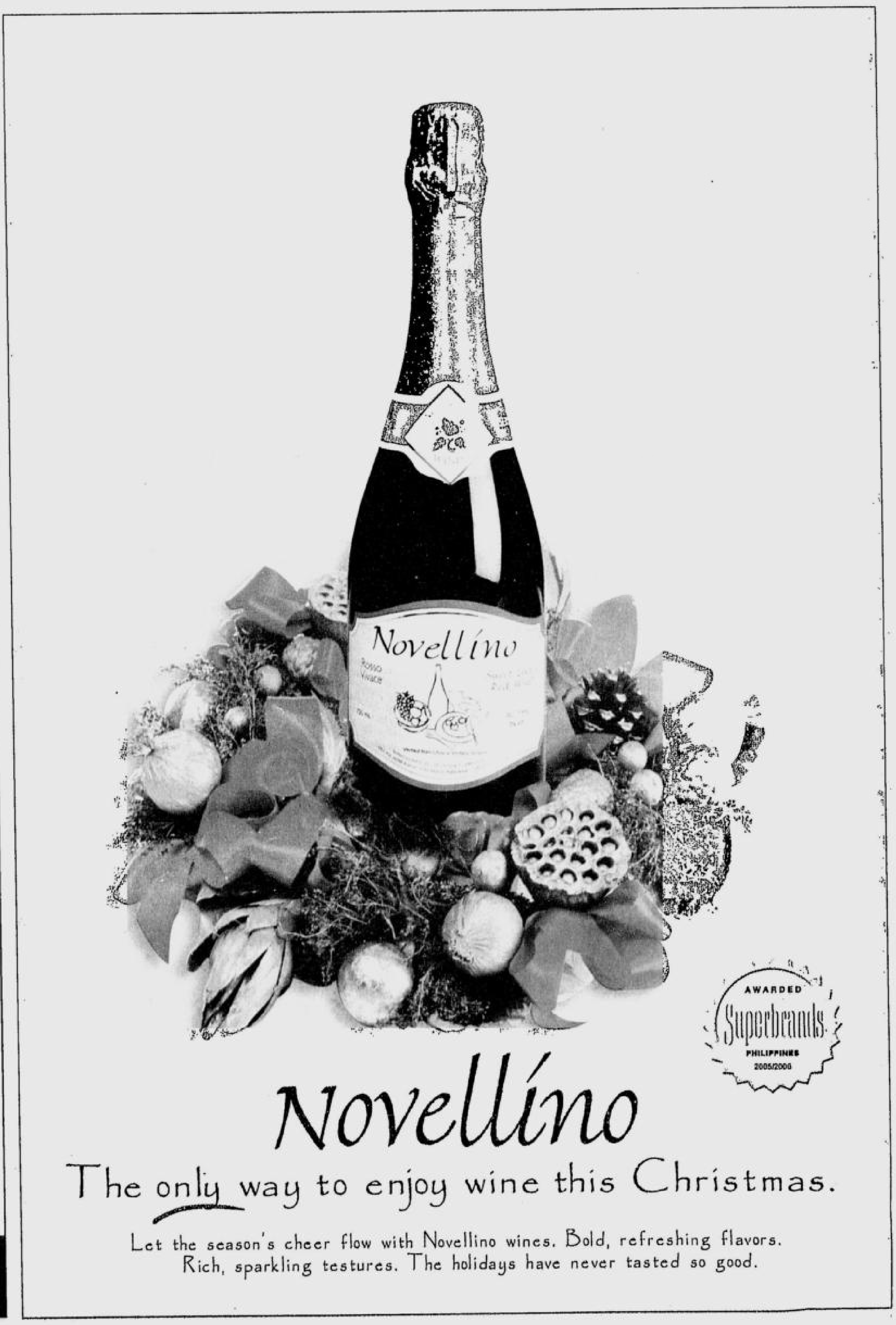

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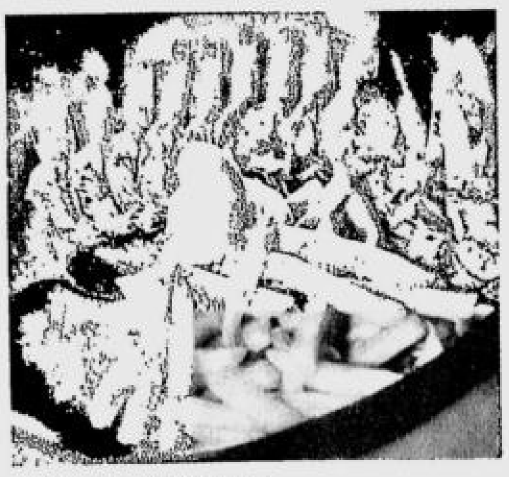

SEAFOOD Platter Two

NEW York Fish & Chips

PASTA & Shrimp Salad

Fish is good company

By Chelo Banal-Formoso

WE ARE A FAMILY THAT WON'T pass up a chance to try the fish and chips offering of any new restaurant we visit. But we've been disappointed a lot in the past so when the Fish & Co. menu says "Get hooked on the best fish and chips in town," it whets our appetites, sure, but we know better than to expect much.

Lucky for us, Fish & Co. happens to be a Singapore-based chain, and Singapore having a very English background, it is not surprising that their fish and chips offerings are excellent.

Their classic fried breaded fish is served with lemon butter sauce. We love it and for us it's the next best thing to eating it with vinegar, the way they served it at a small shop called London Fish and Chips back in Sacramento, California. All right, Sacramento isn't London but the cook at the fish place swore to us once that their recipe was a genuine London fish and chips recipe. And you want to know something? When we were in London and ordered fish and chips there, we realized the real McCoy wasn't nearly as delicious as the Sacramento version. So who cares if it's London authentic or not, right? What counts is the taste.

The secret's in the fish

CRAB with Black Pepper Sauce

PRAWN Fettuccini

The taste mostly depends, of course, on the kind of fish used—its freshness, the balance between lightness and meatiness. The breading is important, too. We prefer crunchy over "doughy" breading. The Fish & Co. version wins on all those points.

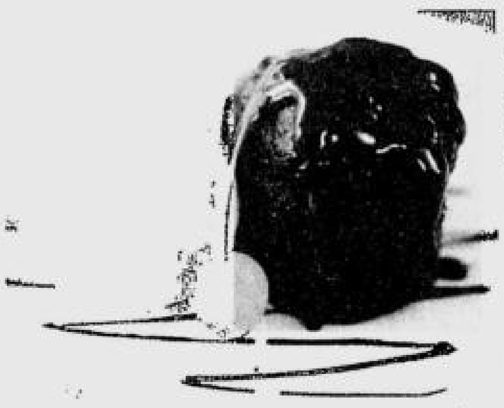
We are told the restaurant imports the fish it serves with the chips, even the fish that it stuffs with Parmesan cheese (the New York Fish & Chips), the dory that it serves sweet and sour style, the baked salmon with citrus crust, the fish that it serves grilled or Cajun, the black pepper mahi-mahi and the barramundi fillet.

Fish & Co. imports its seafood ingredients to maintain the chain's standards, but they are studying the possibility of sourcing locally because, hey, these are 7,100 islands right here and if there's anything we have a lot of, it's fish. As for quality, our sea harvest should be even superior to our neighbors' produce.

> Singapore having a very English background, it is not surprising that the chain's fish and chips offerings are excellent

Before diving into the fish and chips basket, we treat ourselves to the Pasta & Shrimp Salad, a departure from the boring greens we usually order; the Grilled Calamari, a surprisingly tender and tasty alternative to the usual fried calamari; and the Prawn Trellis, a delicious starter of prawns and vermicelli all wrapped up and deep-fried like *lumpia*.

Among the pasta dishes, we fall for the Prawns Fettucini with Creamy Mushroom Sauce. Quite obviously, we're a family that loves shrimps and prawns, too, but go ahead and try the Mussels Penne with either garlic cream sauce or citrus cream sauce, or the Seafood Spaghetti Marinara.


HOT Fudge Chocolate Cake

Another crowd favorite at Fish & Co. is the Portuguese Chili Crab topped with sweet and spicy sauce and served with a baguette. Their other specialties are grilled main courses: Chicken Peri-Peri, Mediterranean Tenderloin and Porkchop Basilico.

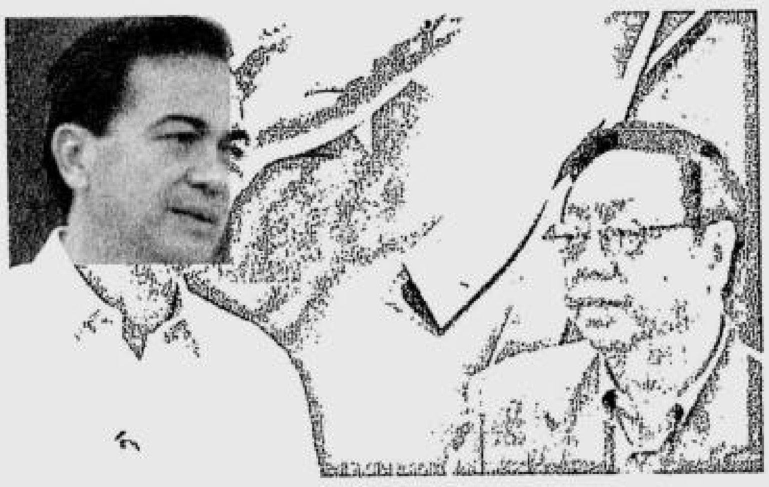
Family sizes

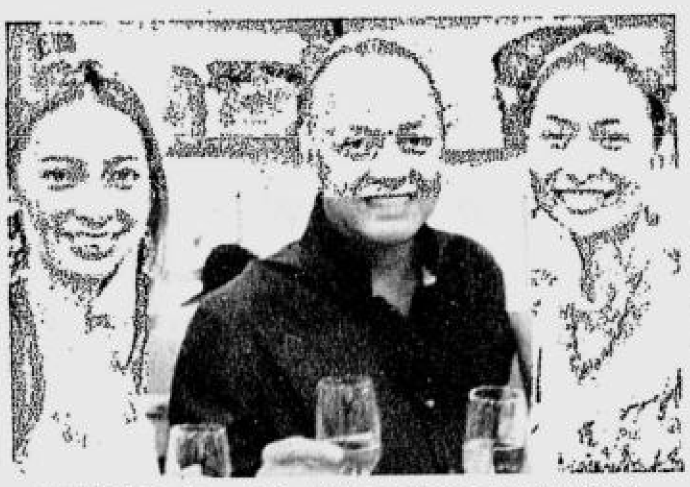
The seafood platter of mussels, fish, tiger prawns and calamari on a bed of rice is big enough for a family or a *barkada* to share. It is also wonderful that their Jungle Freeze drinks come in one-liter mugs, again for sharing.

Everyone gets to have a bite as well of the Warm Chocolate Fudge Cake with vanilla ice cream for dessert since it's better for us to stay away from temptation. But Fish & Co. has other sweet baits too hard to resist: the *walang kamatayang* Crème Brûlée, Sweetlips Empress (peanut butter with hazelnut ice cream) and Peach Melba (vanilla ice cream with peaches topped with raspberry coulis).

Fish & Co. is owned by the Bistro Group of Restaurants, a company with an impressive track record in the food retail business, having managed such successes as Italianni's, Fridays and Outback.

The latest franchise acquisition, Fish & Co. opened its flagship restaurant at Shangri-La Plaza Mall in Mandaluyong City, only two months after the opening of the first Fish & Co. at Greenbelt 3 in Makati City. Just to show you how much we like fish and chips, we've been to both places.


SEEN AT the Fish & Co. Shangri-La Mall Plaza branch opening: Tom Zita, chair of Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts, and Vince Carlos...


... WILLIAM Stelton, chair of Bistro Group of Restaurants, with guests Nicolette Bell and Phoemela Barranda

LILET Maitinez, operations director of Fish & Co. and Lisa Ronquillo, marketing director of Bistro Group of Restaurants

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Bigger and better concept resto

A BIGGER AND BETTER UNO Restaurant in Cebu's Waterfront Hotel and Casino recently opened. The new Uno is a collaborative effort of WCCHC's general manager Marco E. Protacio as design director, chief engineer Vincent F. Lazaro and the hotel's appointed Uno committee.

The façade has wood-slot panels in between sheet cascade water features and a projected Uno logo. The receptionists are dressed in bright and retro-chic "racer" ensembles

Eclectic and contemporary in design, Uno's visual scheme is in appetite-stimulating hues of orange, yellow and green balanced by warm mahogany wood tones.

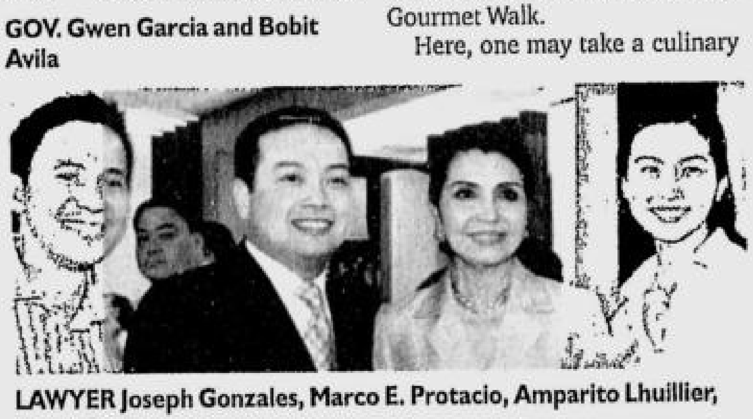
An abstract, geometrically whimsical wall piece designed by Protacio, and shimmering Italian mosaic tiles on the floor and pillars, accentuate selected areas to add texture and color.

More white- and yellow-gold mosaic tiles glitter behind the Hot Station as chefs prepare steaming hot dishes, while overhead, hanging mahogany wood beams partially conceal Uno's open ceiling and pendant lighting fixtures in shades of green and orange.

Contemporary furniture with Filipino accents by way of *abaca* material for backrests and comfortable banquettes in bright orange fill up the space.

WATERFRONT Hotels and Casinos president Rexlon Gatchalian and Michel Lhuillier

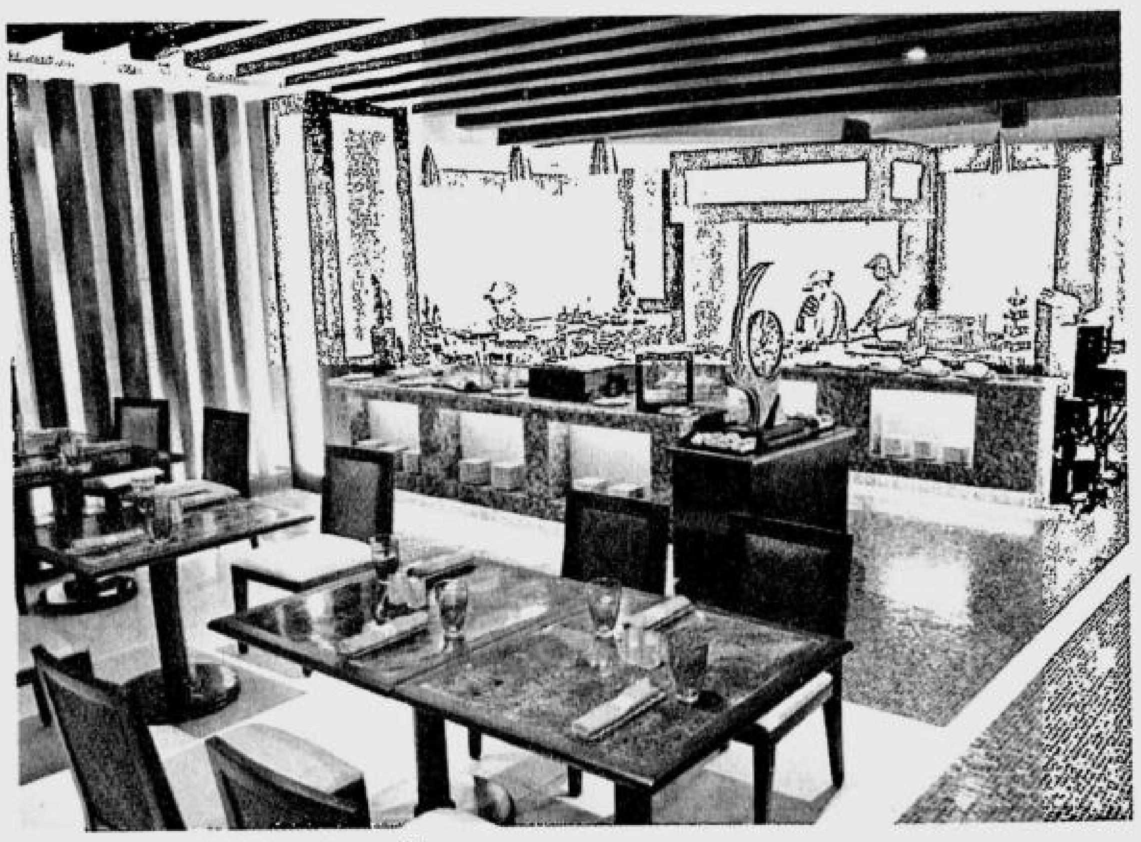
GOV. Gwen Garcia and Bobit Avila


LAWYER Joseph Gonzales, Marco E. Protacio, Amparito Lhuillier, Bunny Ludo

As an interactive lifestyle concept restaurant, Uno consists of four action stations: the Bread and Dim Sum Station, which holds assorted breads, sandwiches, dim sum and cheeses; Cold Station, featuring fresh seafood on ice, a sushi and sashimi counter, salad bar, and a variety of antipasto; Hot Station, where one can find pasta, a carving station, grills and a buffet featuring international dishes; and the Dessert Station with its soufflé and crépes, fresh fruits on ice and Waterfront executive pastry chef Gabriel Garcia's sinful cakes and pastries.

An a la carte menu is also available for those who already have something specific in mind. Specially prepared by Waterfront executive chef Dietmar Dietrich, the menu not only features a selection of international dishes but all-time Filipino favorites as well.

Opening simultaneously with Uno is the hotel's recently refurbished restaurant row called the Gourmet Walk.


WATERFRONT UNO'S modern ambiance

Here, one may take a culinary stroll and indulge in Italian, Chinese and Japanese cuisine, as well as a delightful patisserie and an oyster bar.

Enjoy the best of Oriental cuisine at the city's premiere Chinese restaurant, Tin Gow. Go on an Italian ride and savor the best pasta dishes, brick oven-baked pizzas and juicy steaks at La Gondola. Chill at Mizu with its authentic Japanese cuisine and a wide selection of cocktails, wines and spirits. Indulge at Madeleine, the hotel's patisserie and boulangerie, or relax at Treff's outdoor dining area.

At its opening party, Waterfront Hotels and Casinos president Rexlon Gatchalian welcomed the guests. Protacio joined guests Gov. Gwen Garcia and Amparito Lhuillier in the ribbon-cutting.

Spotted enjoying themselves at the party were Michel Lhuillier, Drew Arellano, Patrick Gregorio, Nelia Neri, Gina Atienza, Flor Ynclino, Cookie Newman, Myra Magsaysay-Sun, Odessa Briones, Jofrance Cañizares, Jo Recio and Hans Kintanar, Teresin Mendezona, Honey Loop, Rosebud Sala and Elvira Lu Ym, Odessa Briones, Albert Arriba and Ren Manabat, Joseph Gonzales, Bunny Ludo, Jomel Gozaga, Renee Villasin, Leigh Carcel, Christine Wong and Philip Encarnacion.

Uno, at the hotel's lobby level, is open 5:30 a.m.-11 p.m. with a daily breakfast buffet 5:30-10:30 a.m., lunch buffet 11:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m., and dinner buffet 6-10:30 p.m. Call 2326888 loc. 8604.

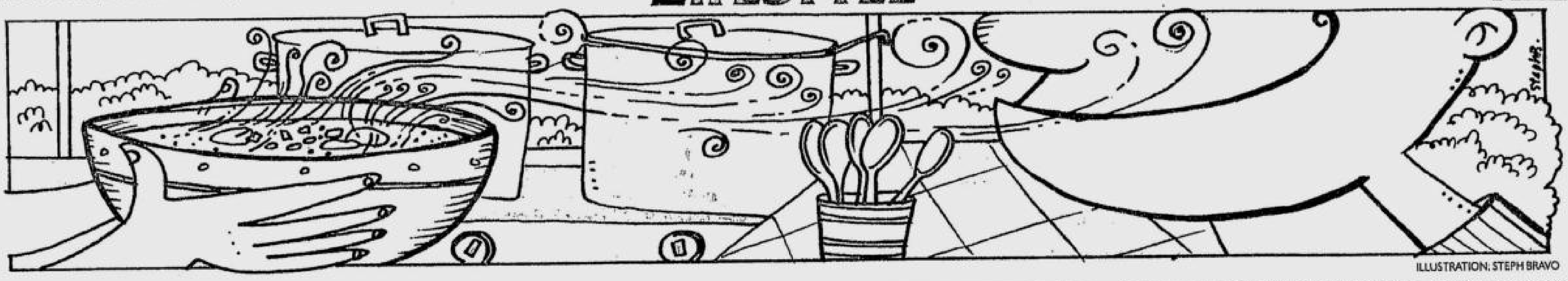


ILLUSTRATION: STEPH BRAVO

'Goto' to go to

(Editor's Note: This essay is a finalist in the 2005 Doreen Gamboa Fernandez food writing awards.)

By C. Horatius Mosquera

SIR, YOU'VE GOT TO go to try the *goto* when you're in Lipa," my irrepressible assistant Louie said, after learning that my Saturday itinerary included Mount Malarayat Golf & Country Club in the heart of Batangas Province. "When you're in Lipa, you eat only country-club food. You should try the *goto*. It's a Lipa specialty! It's a different experience."

And so, I find myself at about 9 in the morning seated on a square monobloc plastic table at Tessie's Goto, waiting to be served my very first bowl of Lipa-style *goto*.

The restaurant's proprietress, Tessie Pasajon, is busy at the counter cleaving away chunks of cooked beef from the bone. She gathers the meat into a bowl and adds finely chopped green onions and garlic. One of her helpers gets the bowl, walks to one of two large steel vats cooking over an open Gasul stove, and ladles a scalding stream of red-gold broth into the bowl. And lo! Smiling, she walks to my table and serves me *goto*.

Spicy, peppery

My reaction upon seeing the *goto* is one of surprise—it is not the usual porridge served in Metro Manila's fast-food counters. Rather, it is a spicy, peppery soup meant to be enjoyed with a plateful of steamed rice. It is classic *kanin-at-ulam*: the rice is smothered with the soup, then spooned with the *laman-loob* and lean beef chunks as one eats with hungry abandon. I eat my *goto* as served; others, I notice, mix theirs with additional chopped spring onion and squeeze in a few drops of *kalamansi* and *patis* before finally adding *siling labuyo*.

Tessie, who is a slight, but sprightly, 55-year-old, is pleased when told that her eatery is reputed to serve the best *goto* in town. She openly shares her winning recipe: boil the beef, cook it to the bone for three hours, *bulalo*-style. Include the *laman-loob* and *balat* so that they become soft and tender. To season, she simply adds chopped onion, garlic, whole black peppercorn, salt and vetsin to taste. She uses *achuete* to color the soup red-gold.

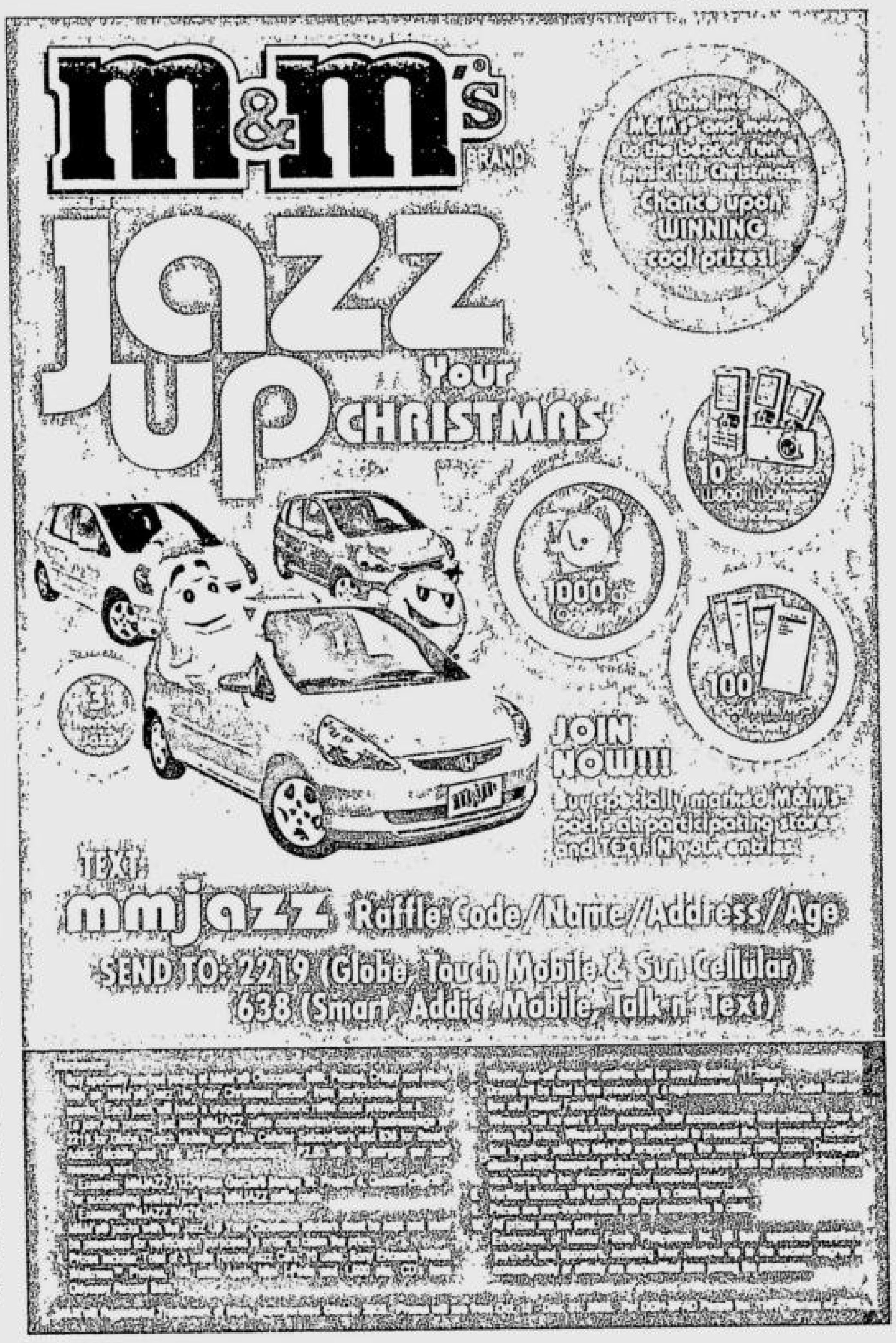
Tessie admits she does not mind telling people how she cooks her specialty. Lipeños, after all, have long cooked *goto* in roughly the same manner, ever since some enterprising butcher thought up a way to use beef parts that ordinarily are discarded. In fact, she tells the story of a friend, who, using her recipe, opened an eatery in Las Piñas, and now has his very own house in BF Homes. "*Napaka-suwerte niya*," she says.

Tessie is like her *goto*: simple, honest and straightforward. Tessie, perhaps without even realizing it, is her own winning-est ingredient. Widowed at 37, her *goto* allowed her to raise her three children and send them all through college. Yet despite their education, her children still find time to help in the unpretentious and easy-to-miss eatery along General Luna Street (tel. 043-9810414)—sometimes also in the company of her four grandchildren, who provide the place with an interesting homey ambiance.

> It is classic 'kanin-at-ulam': the rice smothered in soup, then spooned with the 'laman-loob' and lean beef chunks

A constant stream of customers passes through Tessie's Goto from early morning till lunch time when she closes shop, simply because there is not a scrap left in the two large steel cooking vats that are prominently displayed on the floor behind the serving counter. Tessie estimates that every day she cooks roughly 50 kilos of meat-on-bone, and serves *goto*—and nothing else—to over 100 customers (including those who buy take-out) from all walks of life. Always, they leave her eatery satisfied. For P50 per large bowl (or P30 for the smaller bowl), Tessie's *goto* certainly offers good value for money.

Indeed, I go to Tessie's Goto as an experiment, and leave with a smile on my face, happy with the experience of discovering something new and different. For Tessie's *goto* is both filling and fulfilling in a pleasant and heartwarming manner. The next time I swing my way to Lipa, I will surely have *goto* to go to as part of my itinerary.



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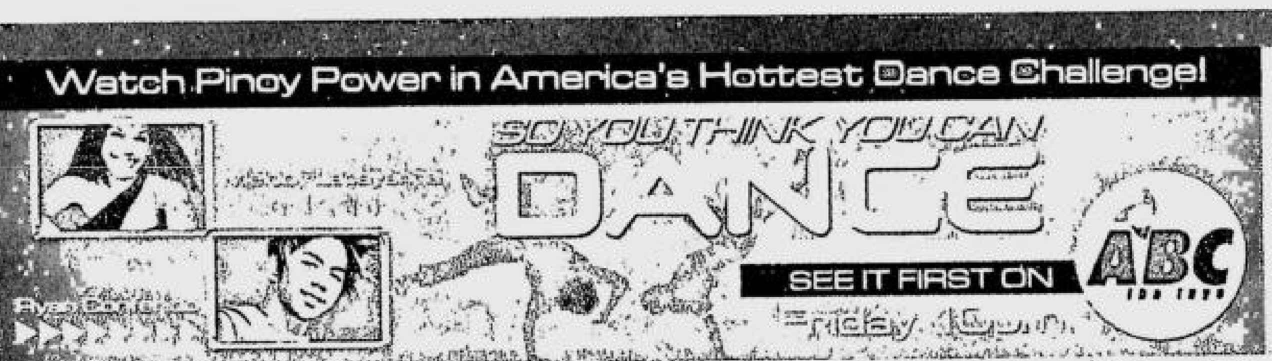

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CNN		Business International		World News	World Sport	Larry King Live		Business International		World News	World Sport	World News Asia		World News	World Sport	World News Asia		Your World Today	
Discovery Channel		Hour Asia		Hour China		Wild Discovery		Blueprint For Disaster		Extreme Machines		Ultimates		Austin Stevens		Walking With Prehistoric Beasts		Power Zone	
Disney Channel	Mr. Bean, The Animated Series	Totally Spies	Art Attack/Un-Educative Bunny	Mickey Mouse and Friends	Lilo & Stitch	Sabrina, The Animated Series	Totally Spies	Kim Possible	Mr. Bean, The Animated Series	That's So Raven	Wonderful World Of Disney			Lizzie Mcguire		Mickey Mouse and Friends	Chip N Dale's Rescue Ranger	Wonderful World Of Disney	
ESPN			Arc / Big Ten Chall: Duke Vs Indiana				Table Tennis '05 Kolonspin	Rewind: World Badminton C'ships '05				Sportscenter Asia	Pro Billiards '05 Men's Sudden Death 7-Ball		Boxing Series Friday Night Fights				Sportscenter Asia
ETC		GBB	Knock First	1 Hr. Edited Version Of Today Show		Elimidate	Change of Heart	Seinfeld	Ambush Makeover	Good Morning Miami	Commited	American Dreams		Queer Eye For The Straight Guy		Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	The Tonight Show With Jay Leno	
EWTN	The Catholic Faith & Vatican II	Angelus (3:15 PM)	Virtue Storybook	Image Of God	Your Vocation: God's Call In Your Life	Rosary With Mother Angelica	Good Or Evil: Who Decides?	EWTN Gallery	Where God Weeps	EWTN Live (Encore) With Fr. Mitch Pacwa		Catechisms And Controversies	The Word Was Made Flesh	Daily Mass (SAP) Live		Angelus (10:15PM)	St. Thomas More Faithful Statesman	The Journey Home Encore	
Fox News		Hannity & Colmes		On The Record With Greta Van Susteren		The O'Reilly Factor		Your World With Neil Cavuto		Fox & Friends						Fox News Live			
GMA 7	Kung Mamahalin Mo Lang Ako	Now and Forever	Date With Tiffany		Dragonball Z	Slam Dunk	Frog Prince	24 Oras		Extra Challenge	Sugo	Encantadia	Starstruck 3	Jewel In The Palace		Magpakailanman			Saksi
Hallmark Channel	Bewitched IV	Sue Thomas: F.B. Eye II		HCA: The Fairytaler	Sesame Street		Who's The Boss	Bewitched IV	The Nanny III	Family Law II		Sue Thomas: F.B. Eye II		Back When We Were Grown Up			Judging Amy (10:35PM)		Family Law II (11:25PM)
HBO			Raising Waylon			Assassins				Dickie Roberts: Former Child Star (7:15 PM)				The Lord Of The Rings: The Return Of The King					
IBC 13		EZ Shop	JVC Interscholastic Championship			Home Shopping Network	IBC Express Balita	Pangarap Kong Jackpot		Japan Video Topics		ME TV		Demolition Nights		King Of Adventure	IBC News Tonite	Home Shopping Network	
JackTV	Dr. Katz	Just For Laughs (Gags)	Beat The Geeks	WWE: Survivor Series 2004				Cinematch	Family Guy	Mad TV		Reno 911	Crank Yankers	South Park	The Daily Show With Jon Stewart	Hip-Hop Nation	Ride With Funk Master Flex	WWE Velocity	
Lifestyle Network	Secret Gardens	The Fix	Mission Organization	Carol Duvall	Molto Mario	Hot Off The Grill	Good Eats	Extreme Cuisine	Unwrapped	Tyler's Ultimate	E! News Weekend		Good Finds	Life & Style		E! True Hollywood Story		Road & Track	Back To Basics
MTV Philippines	Moto Presents: Fashionably Loud	MTV Cribs	That MTV Chart Show		Pimp My Ride	Pop Inc		MTV Hits				MTV Hits	Get Spotted	TRL		Punk'D	Brand New	MTV Hits	VH1 Video Collections
MYX		Rock MYX	My MYX	Mellow MYX	Urban MYX	Take 5	MYX News	Top 5	Star MYX	MYXILOG	Pop MYX	MYX Daily Top Ten		MYX Presents		MYX Bandarito	My MYX	MYX Backtrax	OPM MYX
National Geographic		Megastructures		Explorations Powered By Duracell	Seismic Seconds	D-Day				Wow!		About Asia		National Geographic Specials		Megastructures		Explorations Powered By Duracell	Egypt Detectives
NBN				New Life TV Shopping		Teledyaryo	Diyos Ko, Mahal Mo Ba Siya?	Sea Games				Teledyaryo				Network Forum		Bantay OCW With Susan K	
Nickelodeon	Blues Clues/ What Planet Are You From	Rugrats	Hey Arnold!	My Life As A Teenage Robot/ Right On Top	The Adventures Of Jimmy Neutron	SpongeBob SquarePants	The Fairly Odd Parents	All That	Naturally Sadie	Romeo	Drake & Josh	The Fairly Odd Parents	All Grown Up	As Told By Ginger	Rocket Power	Chalkzone	The Wild Thornberrys	The Angry Beavers	The Brothers Garcia
PBO			Dyesebel				Ibang Ma Man Ang Puso				Ang Probinsyano				Petrang Kabayo 2				Pinoy Idols
Qtv		Endless Christmas (Navidad Sin Fin)	Mariana (Sin Pasado Condenado)	Cabecita	MMS (My Music Station)		Moms		Golden Bowl	Star	Laugh To Laugh, Ang Kulit	O, Mare Ko		All In	News On Q	Women's Desk		Groupee TV	
RPN 9	TV Shopping		Defenders Of The Earth	Hey Arnold!	Wild Thornberries	Sponge Bob	As Told By Ginger	Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	WWE Smackdown		The Ultimate Fighter		Revelations		Newswatch Now	Video Hit Parade	Kasangga Mo Ang Langit	Police Hour
SBN 21				New Life TV Shopping				Winner TV Shopping				Oras Ng Himala		Oras ng Katotohanan		Sony Bmg Video			
Solar Sports	WTA '05 Generali Ladies Linz Austria SF1				Denmark Open Men's Doubles Finals		NBA Game: Clippers @ Spurs							NBA Game: Kings @ Pistons					NBA Inside Stuff
Sports Plus	NBA Game: Miami @ Chicago					Party Poker.com World Open 2005				Raceworld		NFL 2005: New York Giants @ Philadelphia						Celebrity Poker Tournament 2	
Star Movies		Vampire's Kiss (3:15 PM)				Eve's Christmas			True Lies (6:40 PM)					Johnny English			Dick		
Star World		The Bold & The Beautiful		Hollywood Squares	Whose Line Is It Anyway?	Angel		The Simpsons	Malcolm In The Middle	Star News Asia	Friends	Scrubs	8 Simple Rules	Miss World/ John Lennon Working Class Hero		The Apprentice		Friends	Scrubs
Studio 23		Yugioh Duel Monster		UAAP				Batman Beyond	Pinoy Big Brother	Wazzup Wazzup	The Contender		Alias (8:20 PM)	Desperate Housewives		News Central	Oprah		Salt

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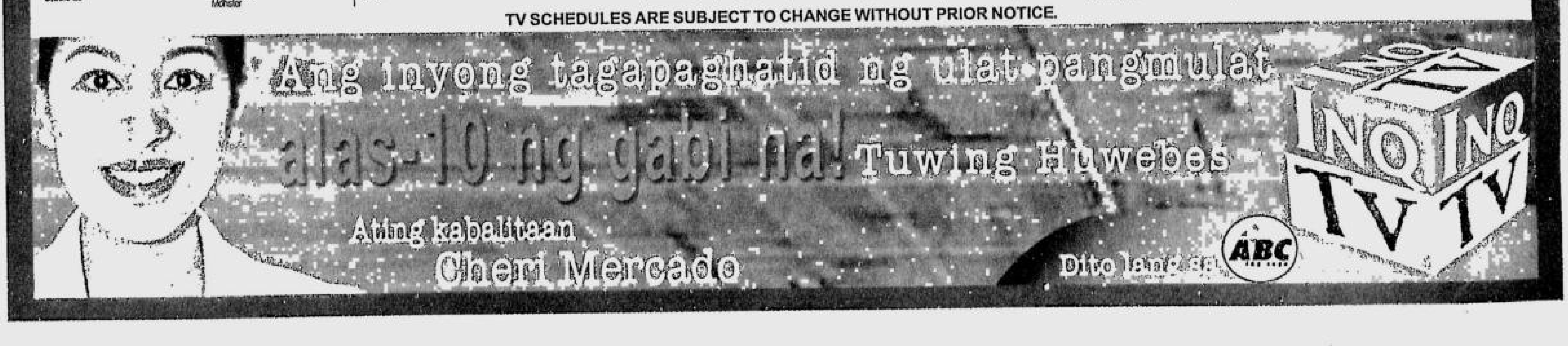

Ang inyong tagapaghatid ng ulat pangmulat
alas-10 ng gabi na! Tuwing Huwebes
Ating kabalitaan
Cheri Mercado
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INQ TV

A memorable feast

From page F1

menu—*menudo, higado, estofado*.

There were also *caldereta*, pork with *guisantes* (green peas) and *kilawin*.

All of those were fiesta food cooked in bulk with the bulk sometimes coming from potatoes, as in the *mechado*, or bananas, as in the *estofado*. Flavor and color mostly came from tomato sauce or soy sauce.

Dinner was followed by a dance where the whole town was invited. The favorite song was "Chocolate," a tune we couldn't get out of our heads for days after. In the distance, another sound pierced the air, the wail of a pig, surely our feast for the next day.

We ate everything we were served, both because we were hungry and because the cooking was so flavorful. My son, who is really the food critic in the family, couldn't stop declaring everything was delicious. How do they do this, he kept asking.

I suppose he meant cooking in quantity shouldn't taste that good. He must have wondered how the town cooks could estimate just how much salt, tomato sauce, soy sauce, pepper or vinegar to put into the huge vat.

He had to be told that good cooks had years of experience and sometimes they could tell what else was lacking just by smelling. And he was informed, as well, how huge chunks of meat were precooked, sautéed in garlic and onions with some salt, to prevent spoilage, a method called *sankutsa*. That way there was no need for refrigeration if the main cooking was to be done the next day.

The wedding reception the next day was in the same place. More of the "do" menu but no one complained, certainly not my son.

I'm glad he caught the tail end of cooking the pig, the goat, the cow and the chickens in several ways (more ways than the Peking duck) by town cooks aided by an army of slicers and cutters, stirrers and fire stokers.

These days that old way of fiesta cooking is slowly being replaced by the caterer, complete with chaffing dishes and uniform plates. And, instead of the aroma of cooking, one gets a whiff of the awful smell of alcohol burning.

E-mail the author at pinoyfood04@yahoo.com

THE BRIDE and groom with their money gifts pinned to their wedding finery in the reception area called *bahay-bahay*.

Good-enough-to-eat gifts

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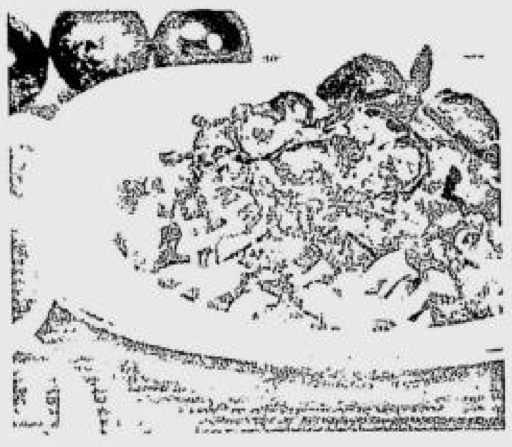
San Miguel Pure Foods Culinary Center shares recipes that may be great as gifts for friends and loved ones this holiday season.

For more recipes, visit www.mygreatfood.com or send a self-addressed stamped envelope to San Miguel Pure Foods Culinary Center, Legazpi cor. Eagle Streets, Barrio Ugong, Pasig City.



RUM-LACED Tomato Pasta Sauce

Rum-laced Tomato Pasta Sauce

¼ c Magnolia Gold Butter
2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
1 ½ tbsp minced garlic
1/3 c white onions, chopped
¼ c Tondena Premium Rum
1 2/3 c chunky tomato sauce
½ c chicken stock
1 tbsp tomato paste
1 tbsp shredded fresh basil
2 tbsp grated Magnolia Queso de Bola

In a saucepan, melt Magnolia Gold Butter and add oil. Saute garlic and onions. Add rum and let simmer. Pour tomato sauce and chicken stock. Mix well. Add tomato paste, fresh basil and cheese. Season with salt and pepper and pour into jars. Label accordingly. Keep chilled until ready to use.

Serve with cooked spaghetti and top with grated Magnolia Queso de Bola.

Makes 2 cups.

Roast Rib-eye with Herbed Crust

1.5 kg Monterey Rib Eye Roast
Marinade:
1/3 c red wine
2 tbsp brown sugar
2 tbsp Kikkoman soy sauce
1 tbsp fresh lemon juice
10 cloves garlic, crushed
Coating:
3 tbsp dried rosemary
2 tbsp coarse salt
1 tsp dried thyme
2 tbsp crushed black peppercorns
½ c coarse bread crumbs

Transfer from freezer and let thaw in the refrigerator for 24 hours.

Insert crushed garlic into the meat by puncturing meat with sharp knife. Marinate with the marinade mixture for at least three hours, turn over at least once.

Preheat oven to 400 °F or 200 °C.

Combine all herbs and bread crumbs. Pat mixture on beef to create a crust

Roast uncovered for 15 minutes. Reduce heat to 180° Celsius (350 °F).

Cooking guide:
Rare: 1 hr 20 mins
Med rare: 1 hr 35 mins
Well done: 2 hrs

Note: You can also insert a meat thermometer into the thickest portion of the meat and be guided by the internal temperature guide.

Carve into ½-inch slices using a sharp carving knife after letting roast rest for 15 minutes after cooking.

ROAST Rib-eye with Herbed Crust

Gravy

¼ c Magnolia Gold Butter
¼ c all-purpose flour
2 pc bouillon cube, dissolved in 1 ¾ c water
¼ c red wine
1 tbsp Worcestershire sauce
Ground black pepper to taste

Melt butter in a saucepan. Blend in flour and mix to form a paste. Pour beef broth in a thin, steady stream while stirring. Add red wine and allow to boil. Season with Worcestershire sauce and pepper. Cook until thick over moderate heat, stirring constantly. Serve with roast beef.

Brownie Choco Pops

¾ c Magnolia Baker's Best margarine
¾ c cocoa powder
¼ c maple syrup
2 tbsp corn oil
1 ½ c sugar
3 eggs
¾ c Baron all-purpose flour
250 g dark bittersweet chocolate block, cut into cubes
1 c assorted candies and sprinkles

Preheat oven to 350°F.

Grease and line a 9-inch square pan.

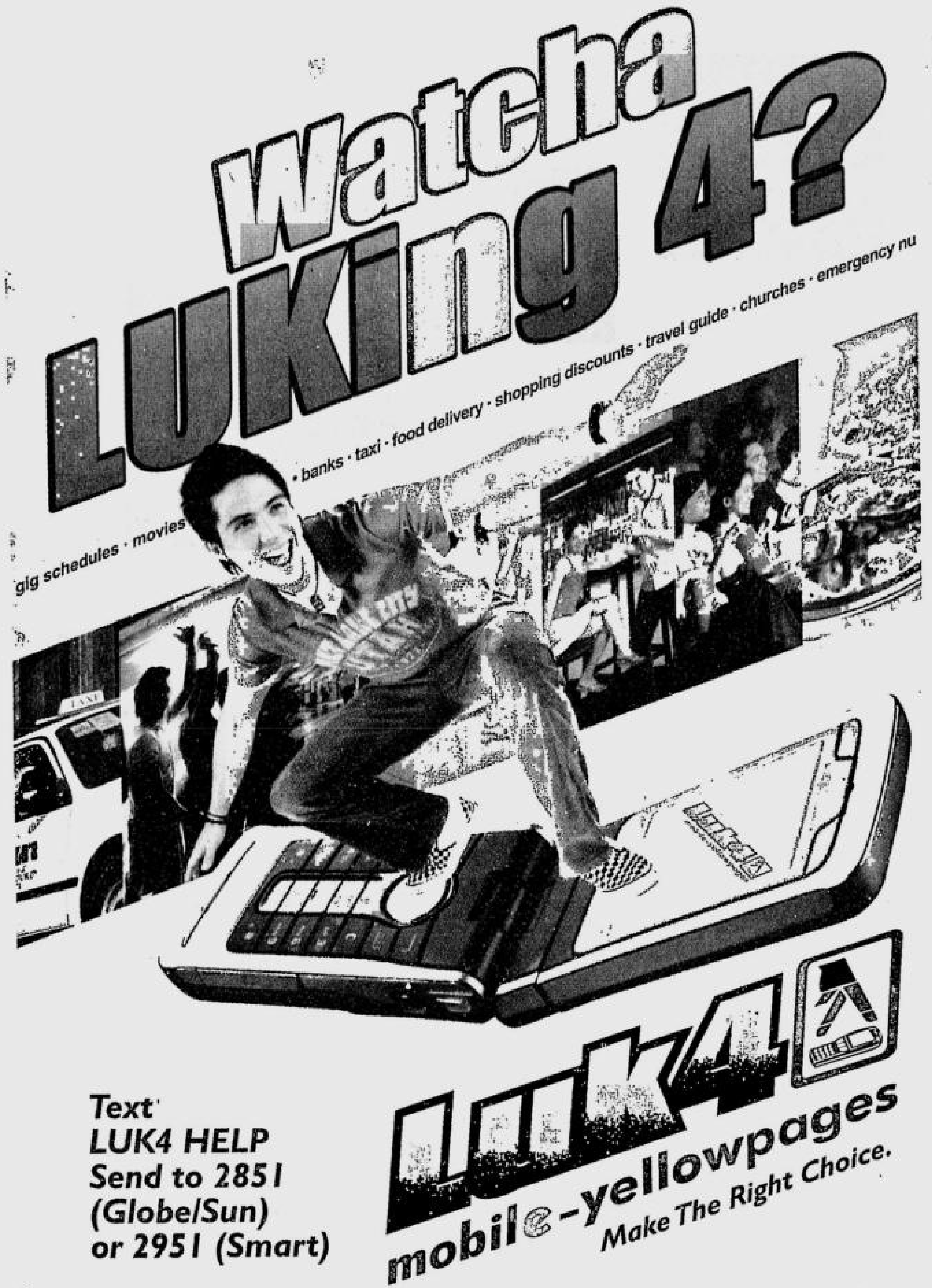
In a saucepan, melt Baker's Best Margarine, cocoa powder, maple syrup and corn oil over low heat. Let cool. In a mixing bowl, beat eggs and sugar until light in color. Fold in flour and chocolate mixture. Blend well. Pour into prepared pan.

Bake for 30-40 minutes. Let cool.

Cut out brownies into rectangles (8 pieces) from the pan. With the aid of a paring knife, make a slit on one end and slide a popsicle stick halfway into it for the handle.

Melt bittersweet chocolate in a double boiler. Immediately pour melted chocolate onto brownies until the surface gets completely covered. Decorate with candy sprinkles and assorted candies.

Makes 8 servings.



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LUK4 <space> MOVIE <movie title or theater> ex: LUK4 MOVIE In Her Shoes LUK4 MOVIE Rockwell	Movie Guide	LUK4 <space> BIZ <space> <business name> ex: LUK4 BIZ De La Salle University	Business Directory Info by Business Name
LUK4 <space> FUD2GO <space> <cuisine> ex: LUK4 FUD2GO Pizza	Food Delivery	LUK4 <space> BIZ <space> <category> ex: LUK4 BIZ taxi	Business Directory Info by Category (examples of categories: hotel, bank, restaurant, etc)
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LUK4 <space> CHURCHES, <space> <city> ex: LUK4 CHURCHES, Makati	Churches by Location	LUK4 <space> HELP	Help Information

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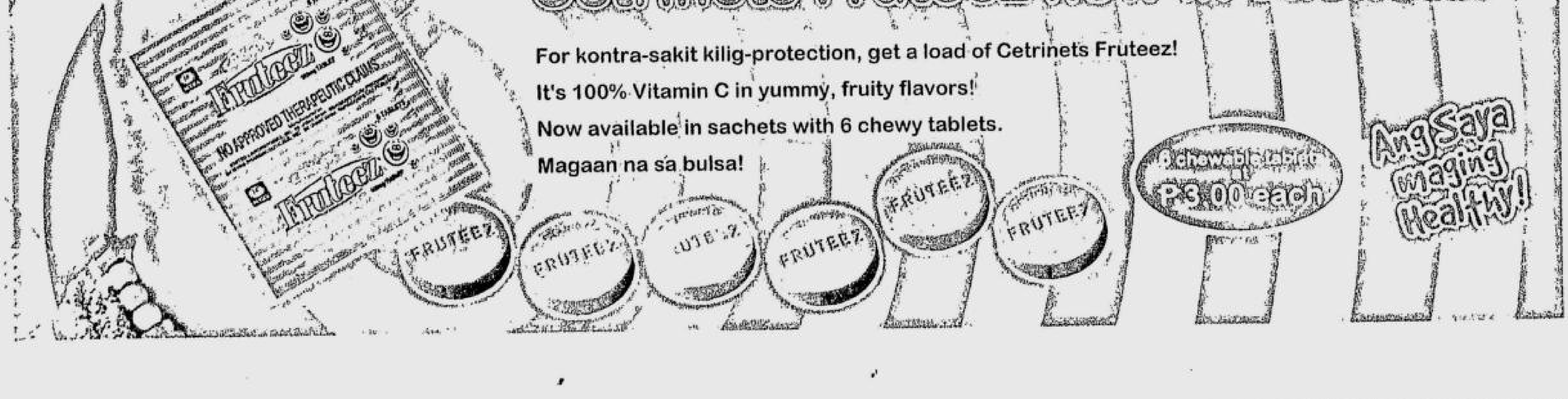

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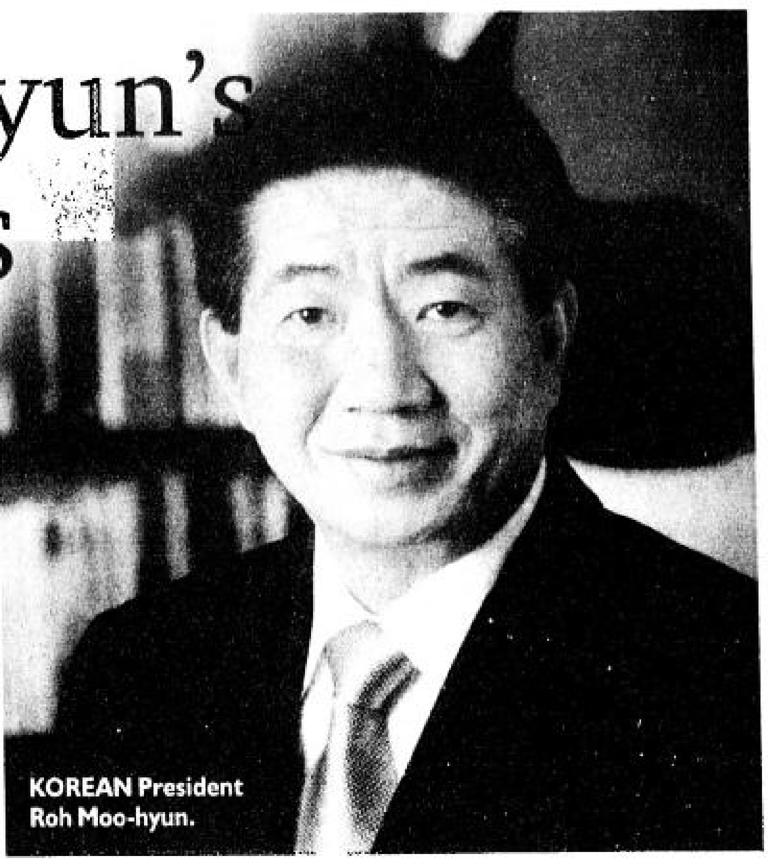
Korean President Roh Moo-hyun's State Visit to the Philippines


KOREAN President Roh Moo-hyun.

ON HIS WAY HOME FROM THE ASEAN+3 and East Asia summits in Malaysia, President Roh Moo-hyun is to make a state visit to the Philippines on Dec. 14-16, 2005 at the invitation of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

In the summit scheduled for Dec. 15, the two leaders will discuss ways to further promote substantive bilateral cooperation. In addition, he will also attend the opening of the IT Training Center. He will deliver a speech at the Korea-Philippines Economic Council composed of business leaders of the two countries. Roh had already met with Korean residents in the Philippines Dec. 14 and will receive Philippine veterans of the Korean War (1950-53) before heading back home on Dec. 16.

Significance and expected outcome of the visit

The governments of both countries will sign an Economic Development Cooperation Fund (EDCF) arrangement binding the Korean Government to disburse EDCF money to help finance road improvement projects. The pact to be signed is named the EDCF Arrangement on the Gapan-San Fernando-Olongapo (GSO) Road and Emergency Dredging Project. By also signing memoranda of understanding in the areas of energy cooperation and mineral resources cooperation, the Korean and Filipino governments will reaffirm their commitment to cooperate toward furthering the socio-economic development of the Philippines.

President Roh's visit to the Philippines will also cement the already solid bilateral relations between the two countries, by diversifying collaboration into the social and cultural fields going beyond economic exchanges. During the occasion of this visit, the two sides plan to sign the Agreement on Social Security Between the Government of the Republic of Korea and the Government of the Republic of the Philippines.

History of Korea-Philippine relations

Korea and the Philippines established formal relations as early as 1949 and have maintained close diplomatic ties. Their friendship

KOREAN/ G2

LG Electronics Philippines welcomes His Excellency South Korean President Roh Moo-hyun

His Excellency President Roh Moo-hyun of South Korea is on a 2-day state visit to the Philippines to further strengthen ties between the two countries. The visit was made possible after Her Excellency President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo extended the invitation to the Korean head of state during her own state visit to the Republic of Korea in 2003.

During GMA's historic state visit to South Korea almost 3 years ago, her aim is to "renew our bonds of friendship and cooperation with the Korean people." President Arroyo also noted in her speech that South Korea is a "source of substantial investment, trade and development assistance." President Arroyo also oversaw the signing of three bilateral agreements on "legal coordination, energy and finance", and witnessed the signing of two business agreements, including one with Korean firms covering the electrification of the central Philippine island of Panay.

President Roh Moo-hyun's state visit from Dec 14-16,2005 is expected to be an opportunity to continue more cooperative efforts between South Korea and the Philippines.

LG Electronics Philippines fully supports the state visit of South Korean President Roh Moo-hyun. As one of the leading Korean companies operating in the Philippines, LG is proud to be a part of this historic event that will ensure a stronger Philippines-South Korea relationship.

LG Electronics Philippines has been a part of Philippine commerce since 1988, and with the stronger ties between South Korea and the Philippines, the company is optimistic that this will continue.

LG Electronics strongly believe that both Filipinos and Koreans have a common goal to provide our countries and its people a better future through mutual sharing and cooperation, and the exchange of economic and cultural ties is a key opportunity in achieving this goal.

As LG Electronics Philippines extends a warm welcome to His Excellency South Korean President Roh Moo-hyun, the company is also glad to be of service during the significant state visit, and even beyond this event. LG Electronics equipped Malacañan Palace with two (2) 42 inch LG Plasma TV (model:42PX4) that will be utilized not only during this event, but also in other Philippine events of Malacañan palace.

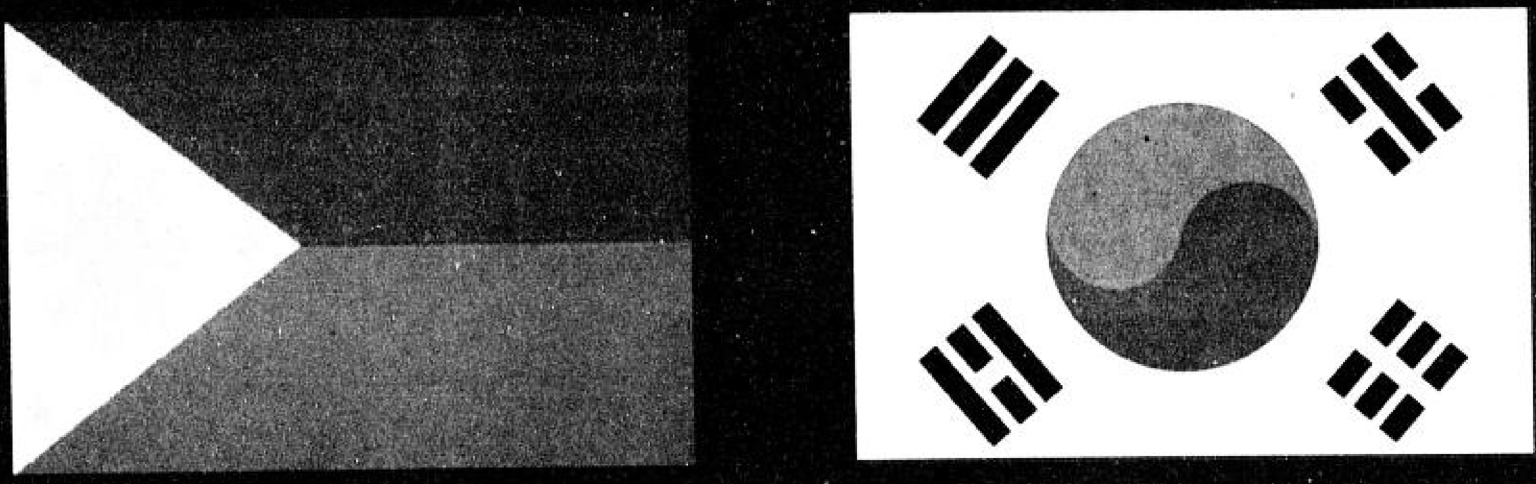
The two LG plasma TV units will be utilized at the Reception Hall of the Malacañan Palace. This is where President Rho Moo-hyun and the Korean Delegation will sign several agreements with President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and the Philippine government delegation.

LG Electronics Korea's President and Chief Technical Officer from LG headquarters in Korea Mr Hee-Gook Lee is also in the country to form the welcome contingent during South Korean President Roh Moo-hyun's arrival. Also part of the welcome committee from LG Electronics are LG Electronics Philippines President & CEO Jung IL Hong, and Chief Marketing Officer Sang IL Nam.

****

LG Electronics Philippines was established in 1988, and since then, the company has continually strived to foster and strengthen business relationships in the country. Globally, LG Electronics is a digital leader in Home Appliances and Display Devices headquartered in Seoul, South Korea. The company was established in 1958 and has grown into a global force in electronics, information and communications products with more than 64,000 employees working in 75 overseas subsidiaries and marketing units around the world.

ADVT.



LG Electronics Philippines

WELCOMES

His Excellency

President Roh Moo-hyun

Republic of Korea

On the occasion of his official state visit to the Republic of the Philippines on December 14 to 16, 2005

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President Roh Moo-hyun
A biographical sketch

President Roh's formative years

Roh Moo-hyun was born on Aug. 6, 1946, in a small farming village in Gimhae, Gyeongsangnam-do, a province on the southeast coast. His father was Roh Pan-suk, a poor farmer, and his mother, Lee Soon-rae. He has an elder brother and two elder sisters. Mr. Roh lived in this village until he graduated from Jinyeong Middle School.

Despite the fact that his family was poor, he always had a positive outlook. His family helped him to appreciate the traditional values of honesty, hard work and self-reliance. An episode from his elementary school years shows his strong personality. He felt he was the rightful first-place winner in the school's calligraphy contest. However, first place was awarded to another student whose family was well to do. At the awarding ceremony, Roh refused to take the second place from his teacher because he thought he had been treated unfairly. His sense of fairness, taking shape in his formative years, would play an important role in his adult life.

After graduating from Jinyeong Middle School, Roh was accepted to Busan Commercial High School with a full scholarship. Upon graduation in 1996, he worked at a small company for a short while but was disappointed with the working conditions. He made a decision later to study for the national bar examination to become a lawyer as a means of preparing himself to contribute to society.

In 1968, he began his military duty at Eulji Military Base, one of the front-line bases, and completed his duty in May 1971 as a corporal. In January 1973, he married his village sweetheart, Kwon Yang-suk.

Successfully passing the national bar examination

Roh had harbored a dream of studying for the national bar examination since he was a child. Passing the bar was considered to be the top achievement in Korea ensuring a life of wealth, honor and influence in society. Since high school graduates were not eligible to take this examination at the time, he returned home and embarked on realizing this dream by preparing for a qualification examination to take the bar. He passed this exam in October 1966.

After completing his military duty, he continued to study and successfully passed the national bar examination in 1975. Upon completion of the mandatory, two-year training program at the Judicial Research and Training Institute, he became a district judge for the city of Daejeon in 1977 and served in that position for eight months. He resigned from that position when he discovered that judges were not able to maintain judicial independence under the authoritarian military-influenced administration. In 1978, he resigned his judgeship and opened his own law office.

From a human rights lawyer to minister

During the "Burim Incident," so-named after the name of a student book club, student-members were charged with studying leftist theories. Roh defended one of the students. He then quickly became a human rights lawyer defending pro-democracy and labor rights activists throughout the infamous Chun Doo-hwan Administration.

In 1988, Roh was elected to the National Assembly where he played an active role as a member of the Labor Committee. During the hearings on corruption charges against Chun's top government officials, Roh came to be known as a "star lawmaker" because of his well-organized and penetrating questions.

In the March 1992 elections, Roh lost the National Assembly seat he won four years ago and came on to serve in the presidential campaign of Kim Dae-jung. In 1993, he established the Research Center for Local Autonomy as a means to promote democracy in Korea.

Taking risks no politician has ever dared, Roh ran for mayor of Busan in 1995 and lost. In 1996, he again lost the National Assembly seat of Jongno District in Seoul. He finally won the same seat in 1998. In April 2000, he ran for the Busan seat for the third time and lost again. But his defeat triggered the formation of the NOSAMO (The "We Love Roh Moo-hyun Club") by his supporters who were inspired by his courage and commitment shown in his struggle against regionalism. Roh was appointed minister of maritime affairs and fisheries where he gained a reputation for his distinctly democratic leadership style and his fresh and dynamic attitude.

Emerging victorious in the presidential election

For the 2002 presidential elections, the MDP introduced a national primary election system for the first time in Korea. Roh successfully hurdled the primaries and came on to win the the nomination of the party. Roh's victory was considered not only a victory for him or his party but also for the national primary election system. Roh's candidacy was affected by the series of scandals that rocked the Kim Dae-jung Administration which gave rise to another candidate, Chung Mong-joon.

Abiding by the voters' decision to field a single candidate, Roh defeated Chung in the selection process adopted by the party. Finally, Roh Moo-hyun, a person with a humble origin, struggling all his life to uphold the rights of individuals, emerged as a presidential candidate overcoming all sorts of political predicaments. Truly, his candidacy represents a victory for the common people in every region of the nation and in all walks of life that he had long aspired to serve as president.

Roh won a narrow but convincing victory on Dec. 19, 2002. In a statement to the domestic and foreign press after the election, he said:

"This presidential election was a historic event in which our people selected a president who called for a new kind of national unity and political reform. The political reform for which we have so long aspired has already begun. A new kind of politics which we can boast about to the world is beginning to take place before our own eyes.

"We have dreamt of this change. And we made it."

Korea: Asia's economic miracle

KOREA RECENTLY PULLED THROUGH AN ECONOMIC storm that began in late 1997. This crisis, which roiled markets all across Asia, had threatened Korea's remarkable economic achievements. However, thanks to the faithful implementation of an IMF agreement and the Korean government's strong resolve for reform, and successful negotiation of foreign debt restructuring with creditor banks, the nation is currently on track to resume economic growth. Since the onset of the crisis, Korea has been rapidly integrating itself into the world economy. The goal of the nation is to overcome problems rooted in the past by creating an economic structure suitable for an advanced economy.

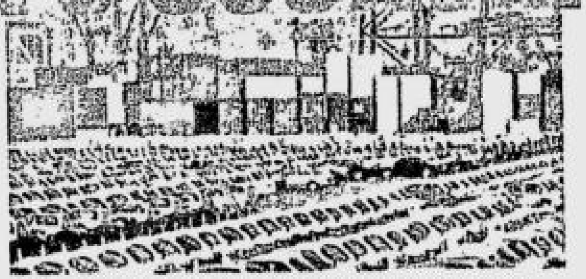
Korea, once known to be one of the world's poorest agrarian societies, has undertaken economic development in earnest since 1962. In less than four decades, it achieved what has become known as the "economic miracle on the Hangang River," a reference to the river that runs through Seoul - an incredible process that dramatically transformed the Korean economy while marking a turning point in Korea's history.

An outward-oriented economic development strategy, which used exports as the engine of growth, contributed greatly to the radical economic transformation of Korea. Based on such a strategy, many successful development programs were implemented. As a result, from 1962 to 2003, Korea's Gross National Income (GNI) increased from US$2.3 billion to US$576 billion, with its per capita GNI soaring from US$87 to about US$12,646. These impressive figures clearly indicate the magnitude of success that these economic programs have brought about.

GNI and per capita GNI drastically dropped to US$312 billion and US$6,744 in 1998 due to the fluctuation in foreign exchange rates but these figures have returned to pre-economic crisis levels in 2002.

Korean imports have steadily increased, thanks to the nation's liberalization policy and increasing per capita income levels. As one of the largest import markets in the world, the volume of Korea's imports exceeded those of China in 1995, and were comparable to the imports of Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines combined.

Major import items included industrial raw materials such as crude oil and natural minerals, general consumer products, foodstuffs and goods such as machinery, electronic equipment and transportation equipment.



KOREA ranked sixth in the world's automobile industry, producing 3 million units in 2002.

Korea developed rapidly from the 1960s, fueled by high savings and investment rates, and a strong emphasis on education. The nation became the 29th member-country of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in 1996.

With a history as one of the fastest growing economies in the world, Korea is working to become the focal point of a powerful Asian economic bloc during the 21st century. The Northeast Asian region commands a superior pool of essential resources that are the necessary ingredients for economic development. These include a population of 1.5 billion people, abundant natural resources, and large-scale consumer markets.

Economic challenges

Over the past three decades, Korea has enjoyed an annual average economic growth rate of 8.6 percent and has emerged as the world's 12th largest trading nation. In less than two generations, the nation has established itself as one of the leading shipbuilders and manufacturers of electronics, semiconductors and automobiles.

International financial markets positively regarded Korea's economic achievements, including sustained high growth, moderate inflation, high national savings, nominal external deficits, and significant government budget surpluses. Recently, however, these impressive accomplishments have been overshadowed by the difficulties of several major conglomerates and financial institutions. These failures raised doubts among foreign investors, which led to a serious liquidity crisis in late 1997. The crisis also created a serious unemployment problem.

However, following the change of government in 1998, Korea renewed its resolve to work with the IMF to fully implement comprehensive reform measures. As such, Korea determined to adopt stringent measures to overcome the economic crisis.

The new leadership took steps to promote reform in the financial, corporate, public and labor sectors with a view to restoring and strengthening foreign investors' confidence as well as maintaining a commitment to a free-market economy, restructuring of the Chaebol-based system, and increasing flexibility in the labor market.

The nation's foreign currency reserves that totaled a mere US$3.8 billion as of the end of 1997 rose to US$199.7 billion as of January 2005 and the nation has been able to repay all the US$13.5 billion rescue loan from the International Monetary Fund. The IMF Executive Board on Dec. 16, 1999 declared that the foreign exchange crisis in the Republic of Korea was completely resolved. Korea's credit rating, meanwhile, was restored to investment grade.

Outlook for the Economy

Korea has been rapidly integrating itself into the world economy since the onset of the 1997 crisis. The government has advanced a new paradigm that involves upgrading business practices to international standards, promoting human resources and technology development and enhancing institutional efficiency.

The timing and strength of the economic recovery will depend largely on the pace of corporate sector restructuring, household adjustment to reduced job security and investor confidence in Korea. The government remains strongly committed to reform and will continue to implement financial and corporate restructuring while pursuing flexible macroeconomic policies conducive to growth.

Korea's goal is to solve the problems rooted in its past and create an economic structure suitable for an advanced economy meeting the challenges of the 21st century.

THE SHIPBUILDING industry is the leading growth sector of the Korean economy.

Korean President Roh Moo-hyun's State Visit to the Philippines

From page G1

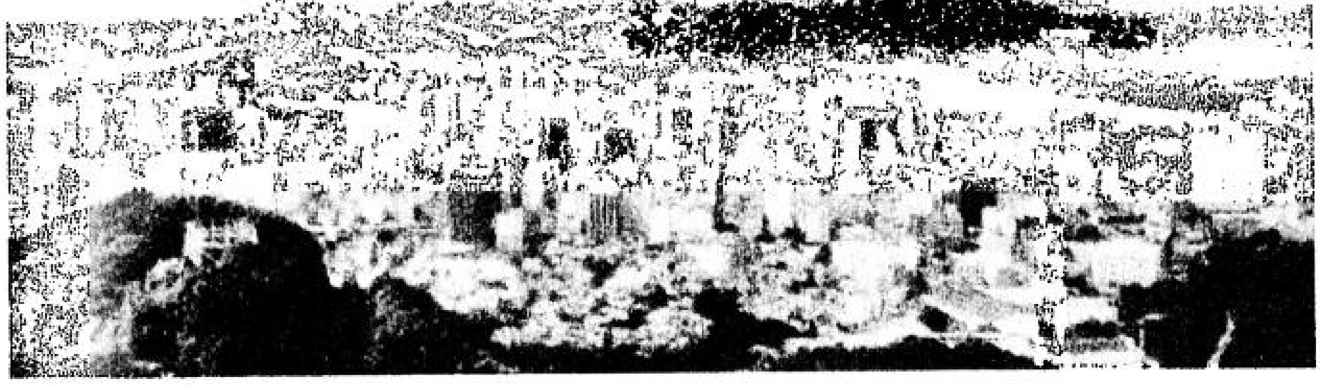
was etched in stone after Manila dispatched troops in support of the South Korean armed forces fighting against the North during the Korean War (1950-53). The two share the common experiences of having overcome colonial rule and military dictatorship to develop into full-fledged democracies.

Since the 1990s, high-ranking officials of the two governments have often exchanged visits and expedited mutual cooperation in both bilateral and international matters. In November 1999, President Kim Dae-jung made a state visit to the Philippines and in June 2003, President Macapagal-Arroyo made a state visit to Korea.

The two countries have been steadily increasing bilateral trade, chalking up US$5.5 billion in 2004. The Philippines is Korea's fourth-largest trading partner among the members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. Korean businesses have made an aggregate investment of US$1.05 billion in that island country, the fifth largest among Asean nations.

The Philippines is one of the most important development partners of Korea. Since 1991, Korea extended a total of US$25 million to the Philippines in government loans and grants to be mostly used in the expansion of infrastructure. People-to-people exchanges are especially brisk between Seoul and Manila. During the past year, a total of 400,000 Koreans visited the Philippines, making Korea the second largest tourist country that visited the Philippines after the United States. Some 46,000 Koreans are living in the Philippines, which constitutes the largest Korean community among Southeast Asian countries.

Korean tourism



VIEW of Seoul, Korea's capital, (top) and of Mt. Bukhansan (right). Gyeongdong market attracts visitors with its Oriental medicine and health supplements (below).

WITH ITS SCENIC BEAUTY AND UNIQUE cultural and historical heritage, Korea has much to offer to international tourists. A peninsular country with four distinct seasons, the nation boasts of picturesque valleys, mountains, rivers and beaches. Throughout the country there are numerous ancient temples and shrines, royal palaces, sculptures, pagodas, archaeological sites, fortresses, folk villages and museums. Recently, travel between South and North Korea was launched, and other sightseeing programs under co-sponsorship with the North Korean authorities are also anticipated in the near future.

Korea is making great strides towards its goal of becoming a prime tourist destination. The country hosted the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) in October 2000, the General Assembly of the World Tourism Organization (WTO) in September 2001. The World Cup Soccer, one of the most exciting sporting events in the world, took place in 10 major cities each in Korea and Japan from May 31 to June 30 2002. Korea's tourism industry has been growing by leaps and bounds over the last three decades. The number of foreign visitors increased from 173,335 in 1970 to 5.8 million in 2004. There have been massive projects to develop tourism resources and facilities such as accommodations, transportation, tourist services, national parks, museums, golf courses and casinos. Most of the tourism development and promotion projects have been spearheaded by the Korea National Tourism Organization (KNTO).

The composition of the nationality of tourist arrivals in Korea has been shifting over the last three decades, from Americans to Asians. In 1970, Americans accounted for 32 percent on inbound tourists while Japanese formed the second largest group. By 2004, however, visitors from Japan accounted for 42 percent of the total, followed by visitors from China at 10.8 percent, making them the second largest group. Visitors from the United States comprised 8.8 percent of the total.

Accommodations

Visitors to Korea can choose from a wide range of good-value accommodations including hotels, inns, hostels, homestays and resort condominiums. There is an extensive choice of hotels: super deluxe, deluxe, first, second, and third-class. Rates start at about US$46 per night, and in the case of deluxe hotels, room charges go up from about US$170.

Inns and hostels are inexpensive types of accommodations. They offer simple, clean accommodations. Rates vary with the services and facilities provided. Staying at hostels can cost as little as US$6 to US$22 per night and inns range from US$30 to US$60.

Homestays offer not only relatively cheap or sometimes even free lodging but a great opportunity to make friends with a Korean family and personally experience the Korean lifestyle as well.

Resort condominiums provide excellent self-service accommodations and are mostly located in cities with major tourist attractions. They are fully equipped with kitchens, bedrooms, bathrooms and so on, and are available also to non-members on a short-term basis.

Shopping

The Republic of Korea is known as a mecca for shoppers, offering a great variety of items at reasonable prices. Popular shopping items around Seoul and other areas around the country include jewelry, furs, silk, antique chests, ceramics, lacquer ware, brassware, embroidery, personal computers, video and cassette tapes, sportswear, down winter coats, eel skin and leather products, ginseng and dolls. Major department stores are found in the heart of Seoul and in many other areas, often located nearby a subway station.

A network of underground arcades branch out from Myeong-dong, Seoul's most popular shopping and entertainment area. Of all commercial areas in Seoul, however, Itaewon, which is located adjacent to the major US military compound, bustles with the greatest number of overseas visitors. Insa-dong, or Mary's Alley, is clustered with many fabulous antique and art stores.

Namdae-mun and Dongdaemun Markets are the largest general wholesale markets in Korea. There are also specialty markets in Seoul, including Gyeongdong Market, a health supplement and Oriental medicine specialty market, and the largest electronics market in Asia, Yongsan Electronics Market. Although most large open-air markets in Korea are closed on Sundays, other large-scale discount stores and department stores are always open all weekend.

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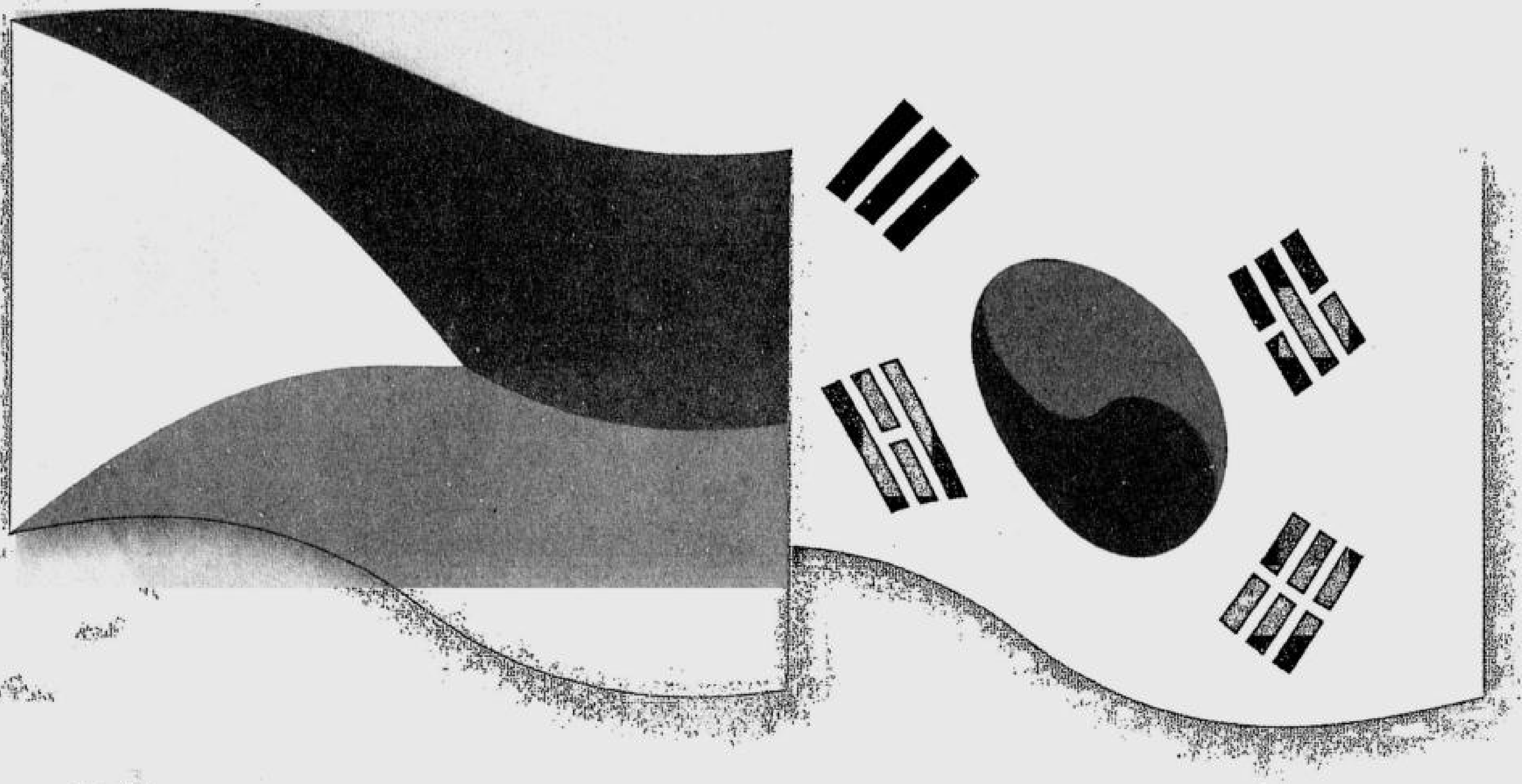


Samsung welcomes
the State-Visit of
His Excellency
Roh Moo-Hyun
of The
Republic of Korea.

December 14 to 16, 2005

SAMSUNG

Ipagdiwang ang Galing ng Pilipino Ngayong Pasko

Winning Christmas Stories

By Erly de Guzman

Galing ng Pilipino

* * *

Once upon a dream, the people cried, "Let's Light Up with Christmas Cheer!"

"Despite the rise in gas prices and political tail-spinning? What kind of Christmas would that be?" said the middle-aged folk

"Easier said than done," said the elderly in their wheelchairs.

The young 'uns rushed in, breathless and all excited," We won another gold! We showed them we have the will to win! And win, we will."

TEAM PHILIPPINES: THE SEA GAMES OVER-ALL CHAMPION. 113 golds. Winning as over-all champ for the very first time since joining the SEA Games in 1977. Against odds, they made it happen. Despite bickerings and accusations, teams forged ahead, win after hard win to a cheering, hoping, fighting and inspiring hometown crowd. Mikee fell and got up to win. Nelson Ilagan and his Dragon team rowed to victory. Sheila Mae Perez plunged the deep to rise to a golden high. And many more. Who says the Pilipino can't?

* * *

Once upon a meal, the people cried, "Let's Light Up with Christmas treats!"

"Despite the rise in consumer prices and economic tightness? What kind of Christmas would that be? said the moms and dads.

"Easier said than done," said the lonely and alone, those without a home.

Waiters and cooks cried, breathless and excited, "Orders upon orders. There isn't time to mope or bicker. The customer orders have to be served and served with a smile. 'Tis Christmas time."

CHOWKING FOODS CORPORATION: THE AGORA MARKETING COMPANY OF THE YEAR. In just 5 years, sales grew by more than 3.5 times from 2.5B in year 2000 to about 8.1B by year-end 2005. From a network of 150 outlets in 2000 to 323 stores nationwide, 9 stores in the USA, 4 in UAE and 3 in Indonesia, making Chowking the second largest chain the country.

* * *

Once upon a star, four kids and a science teacher from a rural town wished, "Let's Light Up the Christmas skies with wonders and discoveries!"

"Despite the lack of funds and limited resources ? What kind of Christmas would that be?" asked the babes and infants of the next generation.

"Easier said than done," said the inventors and scientists of the land.

Four kids cried, breathless and excited, "We dared, we saw and we conquered. Third World won over First World. We're making advances when everyone else says it can't be done." The science teacher said, "I dreamt of stars... I got a planet."

Dr. JOSETTE BIYO: Minor Planet Number 13241 was named Planet Biyo in her honor on September 30, 2002. Dr. Biyo is the first Asian teacher to win Intel's worldwide competition. She won as the Best among a field of 4,000 contestants. She received Intel's Teaching Award of Excellence. Since then, she has inspired her students in Philippine Science High School Iloilo to win year after continuous year in national and international competitions.

* * *

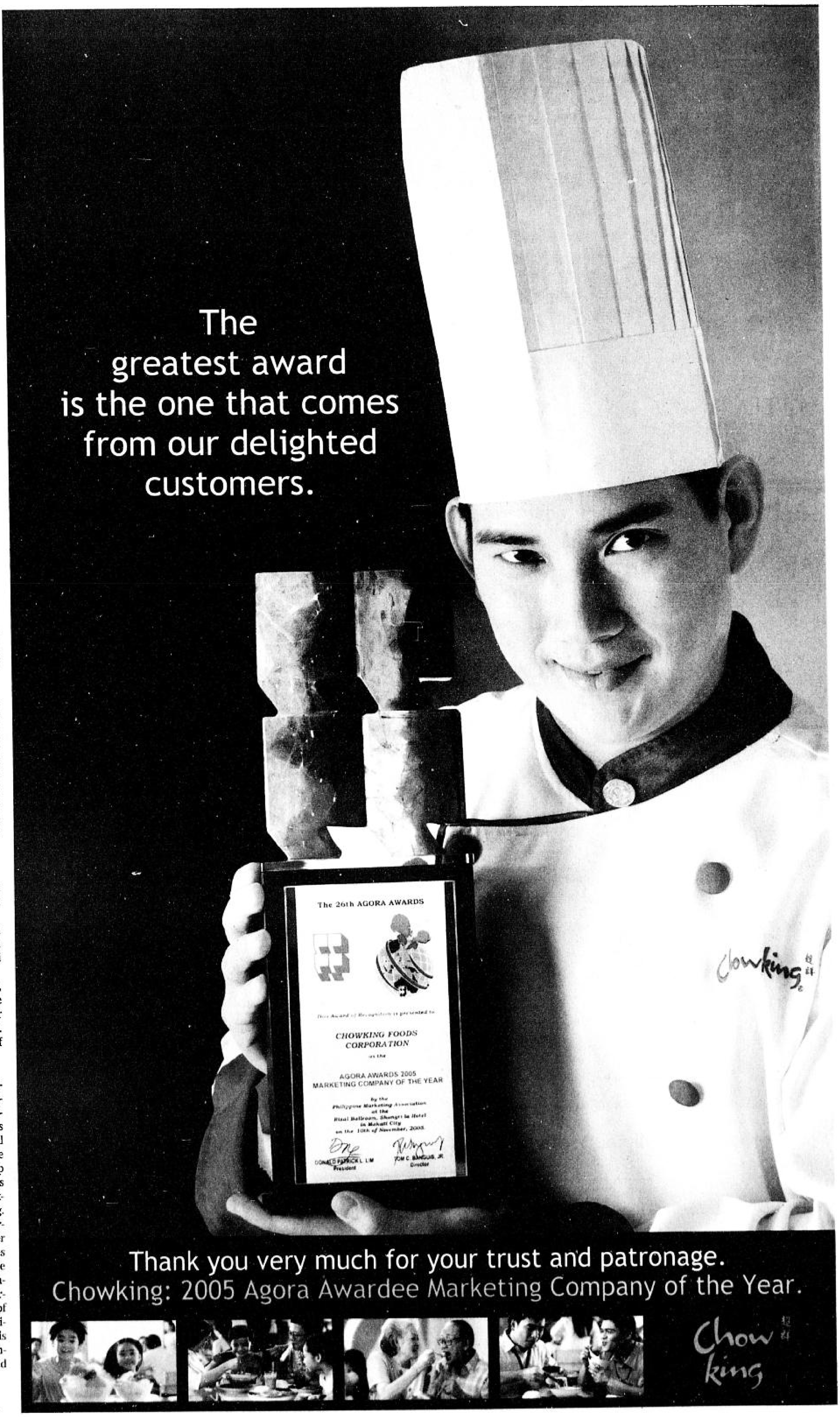
Once upon a quest, the lad with a golden voice wished, "Let's Light Up Christmas with Music and Song!"

"With many hearts laden with care and families broken, some parts here and there. What kind of Christmas would that be?" said the skeptics and the cynics.

The cherubims and seraphims cried, breathless and excited, "Hushhh, He's got the gifts. He's got the 4Ps. Patience: he waited for his time. Perseverance: he stayed the course. Prayer: he leaned on the Master and Maker of Music. And, ah yes! He's galing Pilipino!"

JED MADELA: Grand Champion Performer of the World in the 'World Championships of the Performing Arts 2005. Otherwise known as the Entertainment Olympics in Hollywood. Over 50,000 performers in all talent categories from 51 countries were screened for this two-week championship competition. Jed bested all the champions from different categories such as vocals, acting, dancing, instrumentals and modeling. Earlier in the competition, delegates and organizes were laughing because all other countries sent up to 250-500 delegates whereas the Philippines only sent two. At the end, when the final judging was to be announced... And the Grand Champion Performer of the World goes... to the country of the Philippines... Jed Madela!"...the audience and other contestants became his screaming fans. (Note: Together with the only other Pilipino entry, Rizza Navales and Jed won the Overall Winner Duet Division)

It's a sizzling Galing Christmas, methinks.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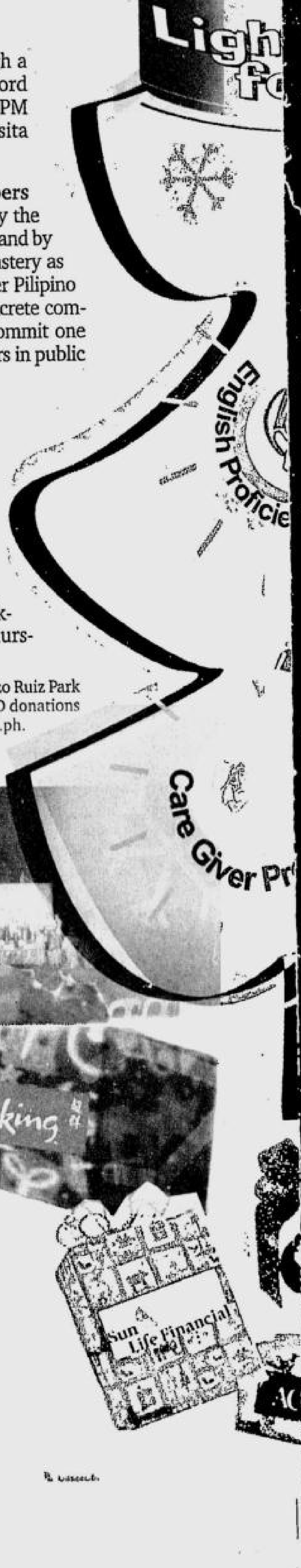
Ipagdiwang ang Galing ng

PAMASKONG GALING PILIPINO 2005 LIGHTS UP A BRIGHT FUTURE

Pamaskong Galing Pilipino 2005 is a unique fund raising project that will kick off the year-long community building program of the Galing Pilipino Movement (GPM) for 2006. In keeping with last year's practice of fund-raising for other causes larger than itself, GPM has adopted the following nation-building causes that highlight admirable Pilipino values, matching the causes with specific Christmas light bulb colors, as follows:

BULB COLOR	PILIPINO VALUE	PROPOSED CAUSE
YELLOW	HOSPITALITY	**Bisita Pilipinas:** an eco-agro tourism-based community enterprise that will spur a bed and breakfast homestay program, exhibiting what is unique and excellent in a locale in terms of culture and arts, scenic spots, historical significance and hospitality traditions.
RED	COMPETENCE	**English Proficiency Scholarships for Public School Teachers and Students:** GPM will award scholarship vouchers. For English Proficiency Courses for public school teachers, and students. This course is an interactive computer tutorial program utilizing speech recognition and analysis technology. It will address the critical need to improve our English proficiency to maintain our global competitive advantage in the information and communication technology (ICT) industry.
GREEN	INDUSTRIOUSNESS	**Micro-Finance Fund for Community-based Enterprises** GPM will make available capital funds for micro-enterprises through a partnership arrangement with NGOs that have a successful track record in micro-credit operations in the communities programmed for GPM roll-out. These micro-enterprises will be a supportive part of the Bisita Pilipinas community business program.
BLUE	VOLUNTEERISM	**Logistical Support Fund for EduCorps: Volunteer GPM members who will serve as Teachers and Community Workers.** Inspired by the Swiss and Singaporean mandate for its citizens to enlist for army service and by the Thai mandate for its youth to spend 6-months in a Buddhist monastery as part of their national value formation program, GPM would like to offer Pilipino youths the opportunity to volunteer and translate nationalism into concrete community-building action. The program encourages new graduates to commit one year of their life after completing their education to volunteer as teachers in public schools or as community organizers for the Bisita Pilipinas program.
WHITE	COMPASSION	**Care-Giver Centers or Nursing Homes for the Elderly and Abandoned Children.** Considering that the Pilipino is the worker of choice for care-giving jobs in the global market, the demand for care-givers, nurses, teachers and nannies is highly attractive. While the prospect of higher earnings augur well for Pilipino families and for the national economy, the resulting brain or service drain has created a service vacuum in our nation as well as an increase in dysfunctional families. To arrest this trend, this program hopes to create employment opportunities here in our country. Instead of sending out our talented workers, we can market the Philippines as a viable site for retirement or nursing homes and health-related services.

Support the cause(s) of your choice by sponsoring colored light bulbs are at PhP150 each or 20-foot Christmas trees at PhP150,000. The PGP trees will be on display at the San Lorenzo Ruiz Park in Luneta from December 16, 2005 to January 2, 2006. Deposit peso donations or membership fees to any Union Bank branch, GPM Foundation Inc., CA 00-001-008201-3. For USD donations and membership payments deposit to BPI Family Bank SA 675-400-7905. For other details, call (02)633.1089; (02)631.3932; text 0917.835.4829 or email galing.phils@pacific.net.ph.



I am proud of my Pilipino heritage! Sign me in as a member of Galing Pilipino Movement.

Name ____________________ Age ____________________

Address ____________________ Tel No. ____________________

____________________ Mobile No. ____________________

Occupation ____________________ E-mail Address ____________________

Company Name ____

Individual Membership
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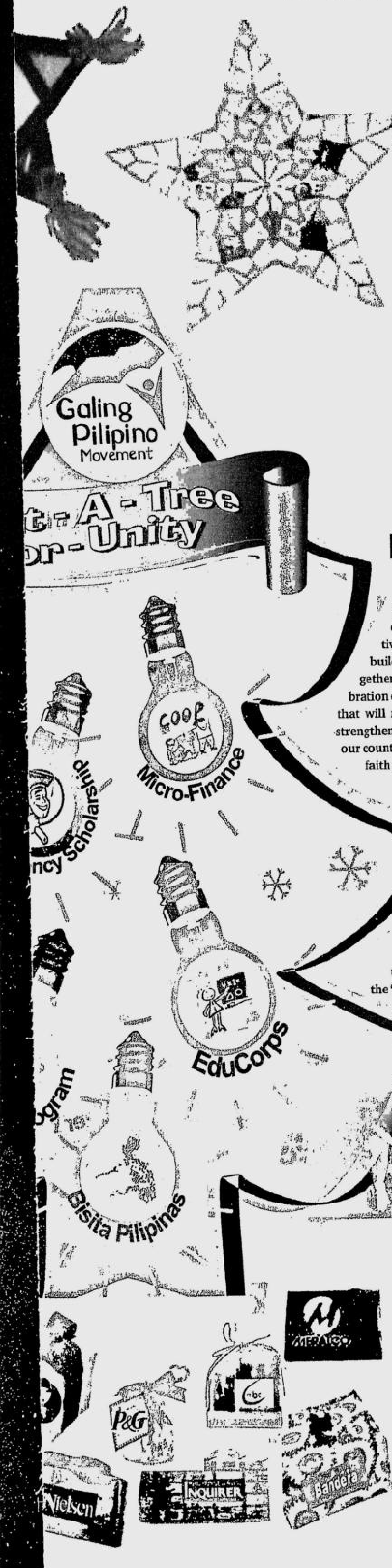
- [ ] Donor P1,000
- [ ] Patron P10,000
- [ ] Benefactor P50,000
- [ ] Partner P100,000

Corporate Membership
- [ ] Corporate Member P10,000
- [ ] Corporate Donor P25,000
- [ ] Corporate Patron P50,000
- [ ] Corporate Benefactor P100,000
- [ ] Corporate Partner P1,000,000

g Pilipino Ngayong Pasko

Pamaskong Alay sa Mundo, Galing sa Pilipino!



Imagine what a majestic opening it would be for this year's holidays - when every Filipino, here and everywhere else in the world, would sing the OPM Christmas carol Pasko Na Naman at 7 p.m. Manila time on December 16, 2005? Galing Pilipino Movement (GPM) envisions all Pilipinos all over the world united in praise and prayer for the nation and for world peace at this "sacred" time. This ceremony will take place simultaneously in different participating areas including Manila, Cebu, Butuan and Bulacan in the Philippines and in Hongkong, Los Angeles, Chicago and New York USA, led by GPM members based there and where Pilipinos converge. Through media broadcast and cellular technology, Pilipinos around the world will be invited to join in this exercise as our "Pamaskong Alay sa Mundo, Galing sa Pilipino."

Join us in this "Pamaskong Alay sa Mundo, Galing sa Pilipino!" On December 16 7 p.m. Manila Time, gather a group of Pinoy friends in your area, light sparklers or candles, serenade the world by singing "Pasko Na Naman", and say a prayer for the nation and world peace. Text or e-mail your friends here and abroad and invite them to join us in serenading the world!

PASKO NA NAMAN

Music by Levi Celerio
Lyrics by Felipe de Leon

Pasko na naman, o kay tulin ng araw
Paskong nagdaan, tila ba kung kailan lang
Ngayon ay Pasko, dapat pasalamatan
Ngayon ay Pasko, tayo ay mag-awitan.
Pasko! Pasko! Pasko na namang muli
Tanging araw nating pinakamimithi
Pasko! Pasko! Pasko na naming muli
Ang pag-ibig naghahari!

Let's LIGHT-A-TREE FOR UNITY This Christmas!

PAMASKONG GALING PILIPINO 2005 aims to harness goodwill and direct media focus to the more positive and constructive side of nation-building. This meaningful coming together of a different kind of Christmas celebration could very well be a defining moment that will rally Pilipinos, here and abroad, to strengthen the bayanihan spirit that will enable our country to face the challenges of 2006 with faith and conviction.

To blazon this spirit of unity, Galing Pilipino Movement (GPM) will light 20-foot giant Christmas trees which stand for nation-building causes. The First Lighting of the PGP Trees will happen at 7 p.m. Manila Time on December 16, right in the heart of Manila - the Blessed Lorenzo Ruiz Quadrangle in Luneta. The lighting of the trees will be led by no other than the "Best Science Teacher in the World" Dr. Josette Biyo, a Filipina public school teacher who won over 4,000 teachers around the world in Intel's science teaching competition, and after whom the Massachusetts Institute of Technology named the 'Planet Biyo.' SEA Games 2005 Gold Medalists Sheila May Perez and the Philippine's Dragon Rowing Team will join Dr. Biyo in lighting up the PGP trees.

A spectacular Christmas concert will enhance this event with Asia's Diva, Dulce, together with the Magnificat Chorale and the Adamson Chorale leading the singing of the OPM carol, 'Pasko Na Naman,' under the artistic renditions of UP Kontemporaryong Gamelan Pilipino and the Marikina Dance Troupe. GPM envisions Pilipinos united in praise and prayer for the nation and for world peace at this "sacred" time. This ceremony will take place simultaneously in different participating areas including Bulacan, Cavite, Cebu, Ilo-Ilo (led by Jed Madela), Cagayan de Oro and Butuan in the Philippines and in Hongkong, Los Angeles, Chicago and New York USA.

The province of Bulacan mirrors the tree-lighting ceremony and 'Pasko Na Naman' caroling in a programme to be headed by Governor Josie dela Cruz at this exact time. This will be the highlight of a lively afternoon of street-dancing and Christmas concert to be held at the Bulacan Provincial Capitol grounds on December 16.

The bayanihan spirit permeates this project undertaking. The Luneta venue was provided for free by the Department of Tourism-National Parks Development Committee. Meralco provides the electricity for the Christmas trees. The ASAP chair, Afif Khodr went the extra mile to stage the Opening Ceremony on December 16, 2005. PGP Tree and event sponsors are led by Chowking Food Corporation, Sun Life of Canada, the Philippine Daily Inquirer, Bulacan Provincial Government, Max's Restaurant, Lapid's Chicharon and San Mig Café.

Join the Christmas Kapihan of GPM-Caraga on Saturday, December 17, 6 p.m. at Chowking-Butuan and of GPM-Cagayan de Oro on Sunday, December 18, 4 p.m. at Chowking-CDO Divisoria. Catch the Galing Pilipino TV Christmas Special on December 25, 4 p.m. at IBC-13.

MAKIBAHAGI SA PAMASKONG GALING PILIPINO!

Galing Pilipino Movement Foundation
Unit 252 Cityland Pioneer Condominium,
Pioneer Street, Mandaluyong City
Tel. (+632)631.3932
Telefax. (+632)633.1089
Mobile. 0917.835.4829
E-mail: galing.phils@pacific.net.ph
url: www.galingpilipino.com

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GPM - CAGAYAN DE ORO
C/o Abba's Orchard School, Alwana Business Park
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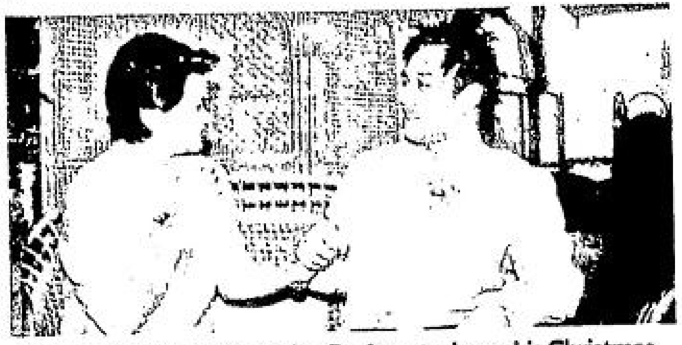
Ipagdiwang ang Galing ng Pilipino Ngayong Pasko

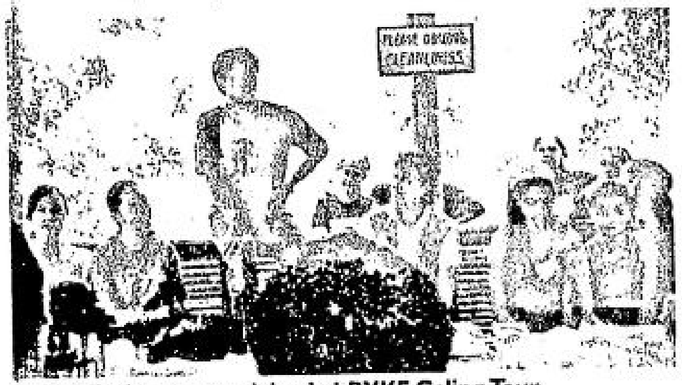
An exciting 'Galing' year ahead

By Roselle Rasay



JED Madela, World Champion Performer shares his Christmas story in the Galing Pilipino TV Special on Dec. 25, 4 p.m., IBC 13

YUGYOG Tugtog Pinoy contest launch at Riverbanks, Marikina on January 28, 2006, Saturday, 7 p.m.



ARIES Espinosa organizing LakBYKE Galing Tour commemorating the Mabuhay March, April 5 to 9, 2006.

SEARCH for participants in Galing Pilipino Young Leaders Camp 2006 begins this March. Camp will be hosted by La Corona Pagsanjan Hotel.

THIS YEAR HAS BEEN FRUITFUL FOR THE GALING PILIPINO movement (GPM) with its membership growth breaching the 3,000 mark from only 70 when it started on June 12, 2002. And it's all through the overwhelming support of GPM partner organizations that provide the means in sustaining this faith-building effort. GPM braces itself for an exciting year ahead, with the following line-up of GPM activities for the year 2006:

- As the world celebrates Christmas, GPM also celebrates the birth of Galing Pilipino TV, a magazine program that showcases what is good and galing about being Pilipino. Catch this inspiring show on December 25, 2005 4-4:30 p.m. on IBC-13. Galing Pilipino TV is funded in part by the Peace & Equity Foundation.
- Calling on music-dance youth groups! Get ready for GPM's YuGYog TugTog Pinoy, a unique dance-music competition that fuses pop and indigenous Pilipino genres. Entries to this contest must be upbeat, danceable and have original musical composition and choreography that fuses uniquely Pinoy movements and lyrics. This contest will go the rounds of school fairs and fiestas beginning February 2006.
- 80 recent graduates of GPM's Galing Pilipino Young Leaders Camp 2005 are fired up to spearhead Bisita Pilipinas, GPM's community-based bed and breakfast trade development program that showcases what is unique and excellent in a locale in terms of historical significance, scenic spots, arts and culture and traditions of hospitality. Pilot sites for this program include Butuan City, Boracay, Pampanga, Tarlac, Bataan and Marikina.
- GP Young Leaders spearhead a summer fun activity in April called "Mabuhay March" - an educational-historical bike tour that will redeem the "death march" story. This bike tour will re-trace in reverse the routes taken by our Filipino WWII veterans, starting from Capas, Tarlac, leading to San Fernando, Pampanga and finally ending at Balanga, Bataan. This LakBYKE Galing Tour will be coordinated by Aries Espinosa of the Inquirer Cycling Group together with the Fireflies. At each stop-over, GP Youth Leaders and teams will organize local festivities that will highlight 'Galing Pilipino' practices and traditions in the area in terms of culture, food and history. The event hopes to spur community-based entrepreneurship and to re-focus our understanding of history towards uplifting values of solidarity and collective self-reliance instead of 'valor in defeat' as conventionally remembered in the "fall of Bataan" or "death march." After all, it was not our Pilipino veterans who surrendered to the Japanese, but the then US General Edward King who surrendered the US-commissioned Pilipino troops who were then compelled into the grueling march.

Catch GPM in these events next year. Makiisa sa Galing Pilipino Movement!

Ngayong Pasko,
saan huhugutin
ang Ham n'yo?
New
Glazed Chicken Hamonado Roll
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per serving
Sixty years of sarap to the bones.
Max's
since 1945

Tikman ang bagong sarap na dala ng Pasko.

Juicy chicken rolled into ham, marinated, glazed and hinamonado for linamnam pork ham can't match. Sarap na di dapat ma-miss ngayong Pasko. Wala nang rason para mag-pigil sa ham. Try n'yo na today!

Kumpletuhin ang sarap ng Pasko with Max's Christmas Chicken Feast. PhP599 lang for 4! Visit Max's Restaurant now.

YES, SALI AKO... SA PAMASKONG GALING PILIPINO

Galing Pilipino Movement

Unique and heartwarming Galing Pilipino traditions support the claim of the Philippines as the Christmas capital of the world. After all Christmas is celebrated for the longest period here and is marked by the highest gift giving and shopping *per capita*, despite the poverty incidence. To blazon this generosity of spirit, GPM will spearhead "Light-A-Tree-for-Unity", a fundraising drive for the benefit of five (5) major causes using light bulbs as the medium of donation. Corporate-sponsored 20-foot Christmas trees bearing these donated bulbs will be displayed at the Luneta Park from December 16, 2005 until January 2, 2006.

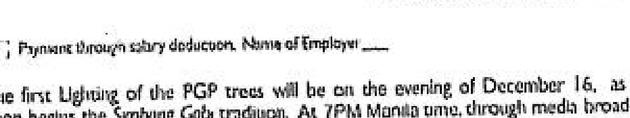
☐ I will be a PGP Christmas Bulb Donor ☐ as an Individual ☐ as a Group

Name: ______

Address: ______

Contact Number: ______ ______ ______

☐ I will donate a total of ____ bulbs (as indicated below) x PhP 150.00 = PhP ____



Payment Enclosed Cash Check ______ ______

☐ Payment made to GPM Foundation Inc. through Union Bank Account No. 00-001-008201-3
BPI Family Bank Acct. No 00675-1-00113-2

☐ Payment through salary deduction. Name of Employer ____

The first Lighting of the PGP trees will be on the evening of December 16, as the nation begins the Simbang Gabi tradition. At 7PM Manila time, through media broadcast and cellular technology, Pilipinos here and abroad can unite as one people in singing *Pasko Na Naman*, an OPM Christmas carol and in praying for the nation and world peace. This shall be our finest hour. *Pamaskong Alay sa Mundo, Galing sa Pilipino.*

☐ I will write, email, text and invite Pilipinos here and abroad to join the ***Pamaskong Alay sa Mundo* on December 16, 2005**

Sumali sa Galing Pilipino Movement (GPM) National Office
Unit 262 Cityland Pioneer Condominium Pioneer Street, Mandaluyong City
Tel 631 3032; Telefax 633 1090, Mobile 0919 379 2466 / 0917 [illegible]
E-mail galing phils@pacific.net.ph
http://www.galingpilipino.com

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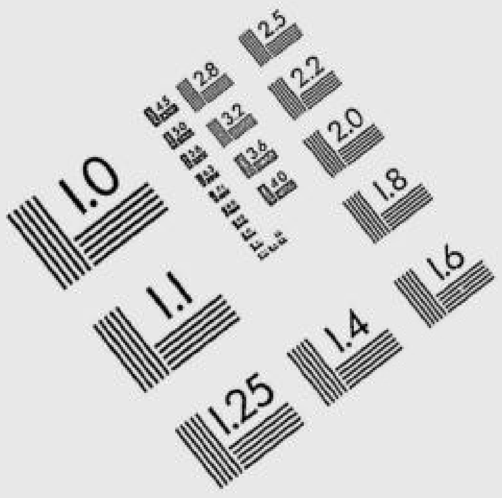
IMAGE EVALUATION TEST TARGET (MT-3)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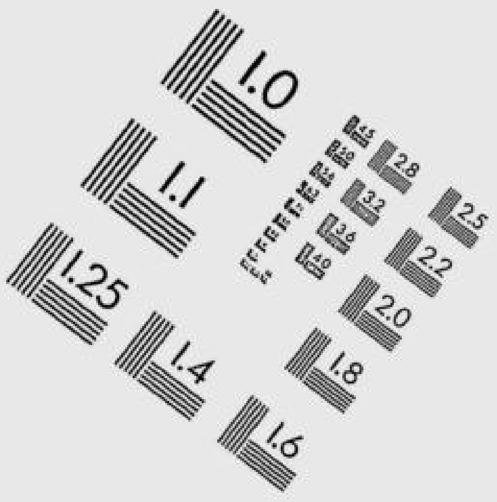
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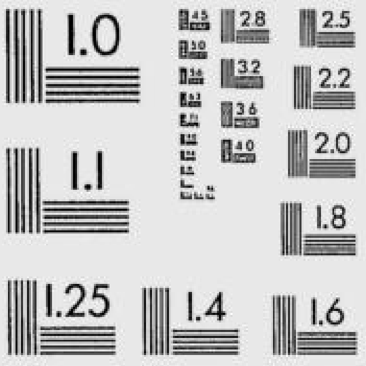
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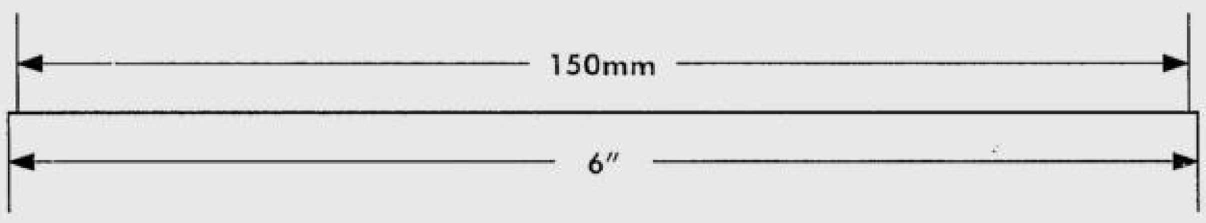

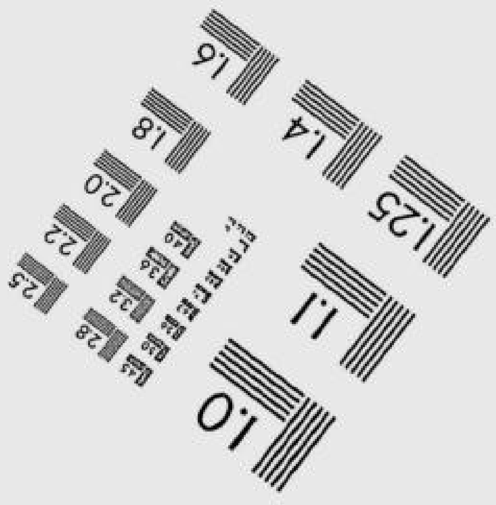
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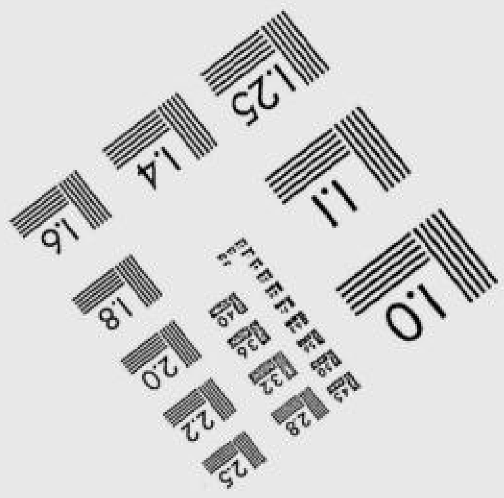
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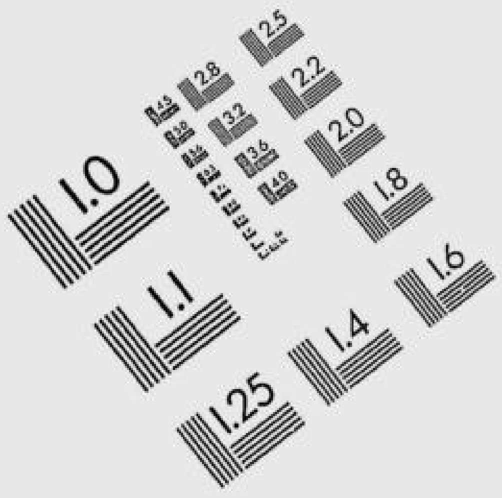
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

METRO MANILA, PHILIPPINES

DECEMBER
16 THRU 31
2005

REEL 371

IMAGE EVALUATION
TEST TARGET (MT-3)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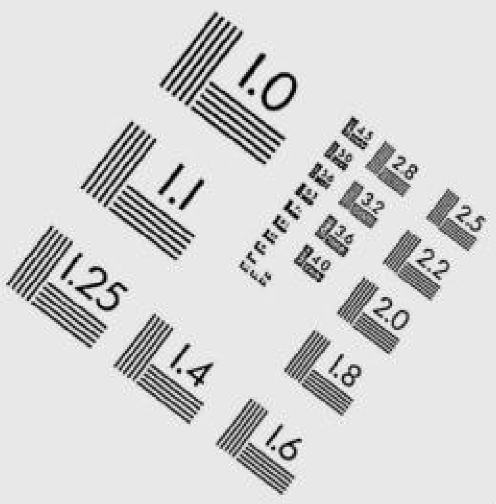
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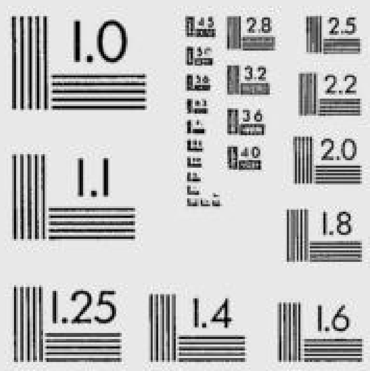
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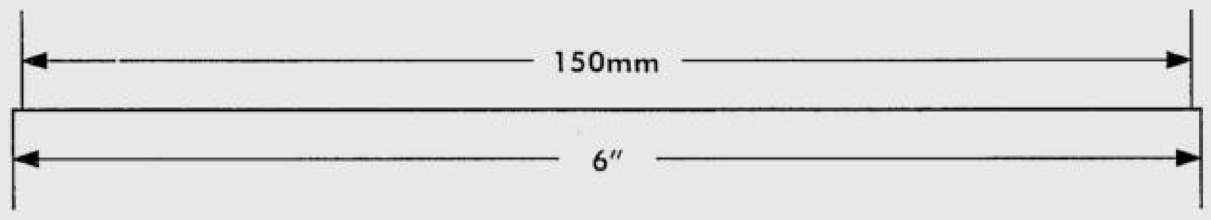

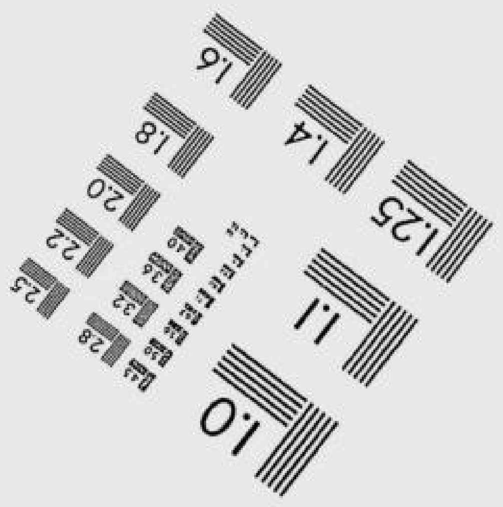
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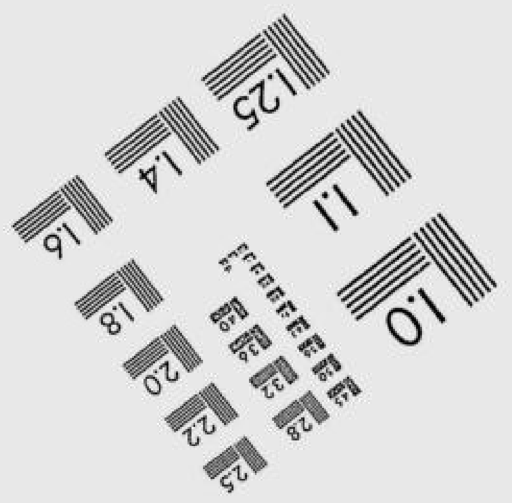
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